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Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 054 June 2010

Interview
Robh Ruppel



Articles

Sketchbook of Edwin Rhemrev



The Gallery

Jason Seiler, Min Yum and
Raphael Lacoste, plus more!



CONCEPTS FOR ENVIRONMENTS

MONSTERS, FANTASY & FUTURISTIC

Volcanic Monster

Wei-Che Juan finishes our **Painting Monsters** series by showing us how to paint a monster for a Volcanic Environment.

Medieval Docks!

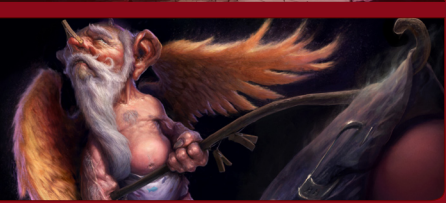
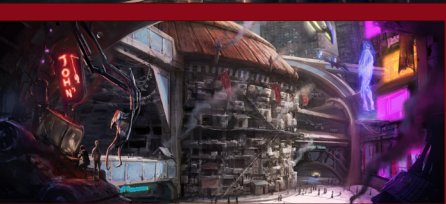
Andreas Rocha shows us his interpretation of a medieval dock as we continue with our **Painting Fantasy Medieval Scenes** tutorial series.

Futuristic Slum City

Branko Bistrovic tackles the next chapter in the **Painting Futuristic Cities** tutorial series and shows us how to paint a futuristic slum.

Making of Diaper Faerie

Branko Bistrovic shows us how he likes to add a little bit of humor into his work as he explains how he created his image Diaper Faerie.





me at simon@3dtotal.com to let me know what you think. This month's interview is with the excellent **Robh Ruppel**. We ask Robh what life is like since working on Uncharted 2 which cleaned up a host of awards at the recent Dice and Game Developers choice awards. Robh also talks about his childhood and how he got to where he is today, and shares an epic quantity of amazing artwork with us.

We take a jump in a different direction for the second article in this month's issue. **Edwin Rhemrev** is this month's sketchbook artist. Edwin has a great illustrative style and creates hundred's of comical characters from stories and his imagination. Edwin shares with us some of his sketches that he does on his everyday commute as well as a selection of images of his favorite subject, Pirates!

If super realistic marines is more your thing, check out **Chase Stone's** superb making of. You may remember his amazing image Dust from the January issue of the magazine, well in this issue Chase shows us how to use references to create an accurate look to your image, and how to use facial expressions to give your painting a dramatic feel.

Ok, so on to tutorials, and first up this month is the tutorial for our great cover image by **Wei-Che Juan**. Wei-Che or Jason as he is known will talk us through creating a creature that lives in a volcanic environment. Jason will have had plenty of references for Volcano's if he has been watching the news recently, though hopefully Jason's volcano won't ruin anyone's holiday. Jason uses photo's to create parts of his image and shows us how to give the image a feeling of immense heat.

Branko Bistrovic prepares his first tutorial for us this month, guiding us through the process of painting a futuristic slum. Branko uses trial and error to correct his composition and walks us through painting a hologram as he demonstrates how to build a scene from beginning to end. On the subject of painting Cities, in this month's Fantasy Medieval

Editorial

Welcome to the June issue of 2DArtist. We hope you are all ready for a plethora of gripping new tutorials in this month's issue. This month we are very excited to launch 2DArtist in a great new format that offers an abundance of new features that we hope you all enjoy. We are always trying to improve 2DArtist magazine so get in touch with



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"Go forward and forward"

Digital Art Masters: Volume 4 – Free Chapter

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Scene **Andreas Rocha** shows us how he painted his impressive scene. Andreas captures a fantasy landscape that includes a dock, floating merchant vessels and a dramatic looking city that sits by still sunlit waters.

Those of you hoping to see the last part of **Chee Ming Wong's** steampunk tutorial will have to wait one more month I am afraid, Chee is filling the last chapter with so much steampunk excellence that he was unable to get his work in this month, but I hope you are ready next month for the epic final chapter. We have thrown in an extra making of this month due to the missing tutorial and it really is a great one. **Branko Bistrovic** shows us how he made his image Diaper Faerie.

This month's issue also includes an impressive gallery featuring work from **Raphael Lacoste**, **Tamara Bakylecheva** and many more. Have Fun!
Ed.

Contributing Artists

Every month many artists around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit more about them! If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine, please contact: simon@3dtotal.com



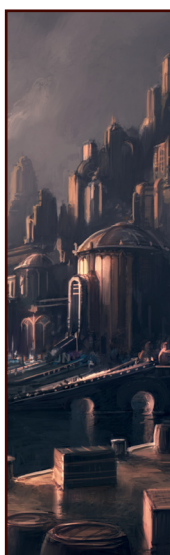
Robh Ruppel

Robh has designed for video games, feature films and animation, publishing, and theme parks. Most recently Uncharted 2 took almost every GOTY award and several for best Art Direction. He has taught at the Art Center College of Design, Gnomon and Concept Design Academy. He has received Gold and Silver awards from the Spectrum Fantasy Art Annual and has been published in several other annuals and collections. When not painting he paints. robhrr@yahoo.com



Andreas Rocha

Andreas Rocha is a 2D freelance artist from Lisbon/Portugal, specializing in environments, be it matte painting or conceptual artwork. He studied architecture in college, but soon found that his true love was for digital painting. His work includes concepts for games, album/book covers, matte paintings for advertising and editorial illustration among others." <http://www.andreasrocha.com>
rocha.andreas@gmail.com



Edwin Rhemrev

Edwin is a lead concept artist at a Dutch game studio, he is 32 years old, and currently living in The Hague, in The Netherlands. He loves visual development and especially character design. Besides game development Edwin sees himself working on a big animation production one day, and also teaching visual development would be high on his list. <http://www.rhemrev.com>
edwin@rhemrev.com



Space Journey by Jama Jurabaev



Dr. Chee Ming Wong

Dr. Wong is both a visual imagineer & director of Opus Artz Ltd and has over 10 years of creative visualization and industrial design experience, working with a diverse range of game & animation developers worldwide.

His projects have included The Edge of Twilight, External Enviromental Art Consultant on Bioshock 2 and Senior Concept Artist and Visual Lead for the MMO "Infinity: The Quest For Earth".

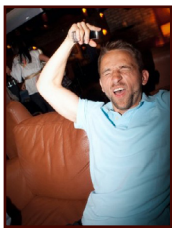
<http://www.opusartz.com>
chee@opusartz.com



Wei-Che Juan

Wei-Che, Jason, Juan was born in Taichung, Taiwan in 1977. He always wanted to get a chance to study at an art school but he studied a four-year bachelor degree in Mathematics instead. After finishing his studies in 2001, he decided to pursue and fulfill his desire to work in art by taking on a different learning path in the states. It is his belief that in a wonderful painting, each stroke tells its own story for being there.

jasonjuan05@gmail.com



Branko Bistrovic

Color Supervisor in an animation studio by day, and a dark and handsome doodler by night ... He hopes to one

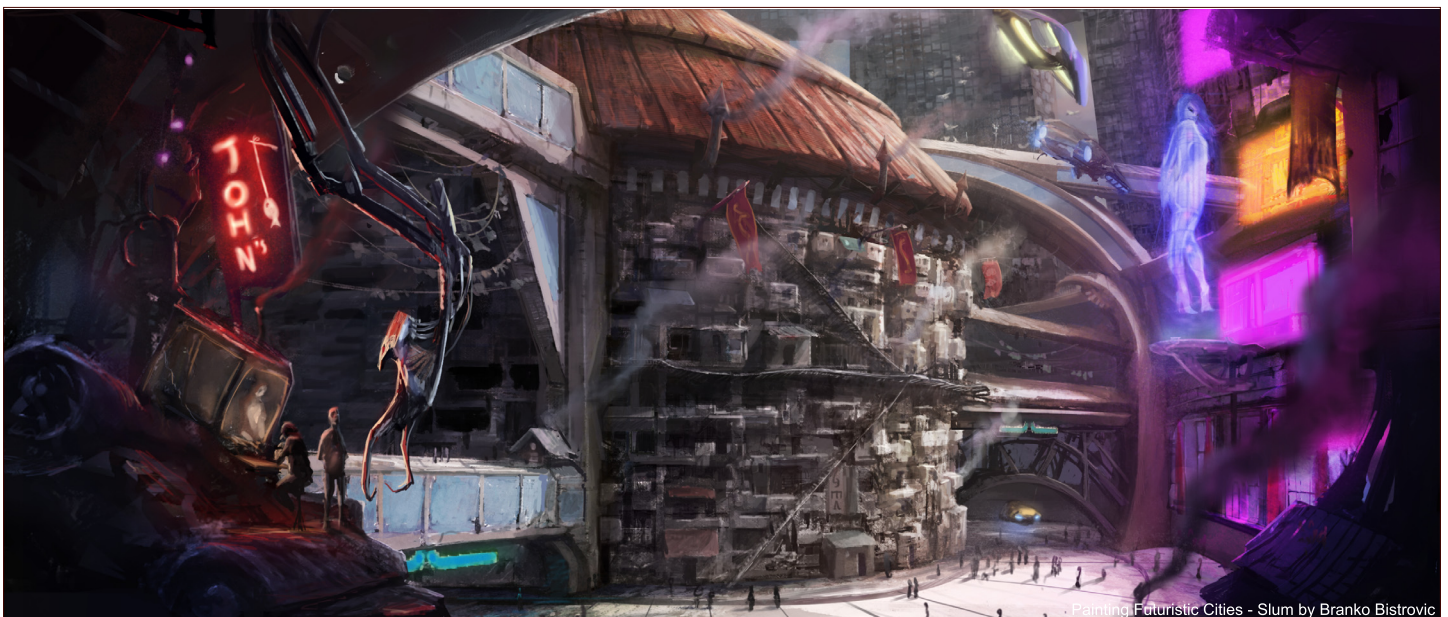
day achieve the coveted status of concept artist, but for the moment is happy with bringing to life his own imaginings for himself, as well as some contract work on the side of course.

<http://www.brushdreams.com/brankosfurnace.swf>
bisvic@gmail.com



Would You Like To Contribute To 3DCreative Or 2DArtist Magazines?

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“It’s like being in the trenches during WW1. When the bullets are flying overhead and the bombs are going off you don’t know how much ground you’ve covered [on a game] until you pop your head out at the end and go, “wow”.”

Robh Ruppel

Robh Ruppel has become a familiar name to the 3DTotal team recently as we’ve been lucky enough to showcase a number of his amazing images on our site. Intrigued by this rising star, we decided we wanted to know more about him and Robh very kindly obliged! So read on to find out what makes this artist tick, how his work and artistic style has evolved and the details of his latest big adventure: working as art director on the smash-hit *Uncharted 2*.

Interview with Robh Ruppel

Hi Robh – and welcome to the pages of 2DArtist! Now I just have to start by saying how much I love your website. It's so chocked full of amazing images – seriously, you've probably got the biggest collection I've seen on any artist's website! And it's not just from one genre/medium either; there are matte paintings, concept art, animation stills, sketches, digital plein aire pieces (outdoor paintings for all of us uneducated), fantasy art ... I could go on. So I guess what I'd like to begin by asking is where did it all start for you? When did you realize that this was what you wanted to do with your life and was it difficult to get to where you are today?

As a kid you have a clearer idea of what you want to do. So the answer is ever since I was four. Now as we go through school we get pulled here and there by different interests and occupations. I studied film making and animation at the High School for Performing Arts, and Electrical Engineering, Industrial Design and Illustration in college. I ended



up getting a great education but in a very roundabout way. I wouldn't say it's difficult to get to the kind of stage I'm at as long as you're willingly to put in the hours. There are no shortcuts. The hours/years I spent painting and the sketchbooks I have filled is the "hard" part that most people shirk away from. The sooner you start being obsessed with what you're doing, the sooner you'll get "there"!

Looks like you've certainly had a well-rounded education! Was it a conscious decision to study various artistic mediums rather than just taking a straightforward artistic path, or was it something you just fell into? Where there any drawbacks to such a route? And do you think it's shaped how your artistic style has developed?

Oh no, it was process of elimination. Most people don't know that you can make a living





as an illustrator or concept artist. Nowadays it's more prevalent and in the media, but just a short while ago (think *Blade Runner*) there weren't teams of designers specializing in this kind of area. Electrical Engineering led to Industrial Design which led to studying figure drawing with

Fred Fixler at the California Art Institute. It most definitely shaped me as an artist because of all the varied fields of study!

Now you've been involved in a pretty high-profile project recently: working as art director

on *Uncharted 2: Among Thieves*. I checked out the game's Wikipedia page and it's won a bucketload of critical acclaim, culminating in sweeping the boards at this year's DICE and Game Developers Choice awards. What was it like working on such a project? Did you ever



dream it would become as successful as it has; was there a moment when you thought, "Yes, this is going to be something special" or was it all in a day's work?

The best analogy I can give is that it's like being in the trenches during WW1. When the bullets

are flying overhead and the bombs are going off you don't know how much ground you've covered until you pop your head out at the end and go, "wow". My first inkling was when I played the follow up to very a popular game that had a huge following and went, "wait a minute,

our game is looking really good in comparison". I won't say which game, but we were so focused on perfecting what we doing that it wasn't until later that we could truly see what we had achieved.

In a practical sense, what was your involvement with the project? Were you designing any aspects of the artwork yourself or was it more of a case of managing a team? And looking back now, are there any parts you're particularly proud of, or is there anything that you would change?

There're tons of things I would like to change, but most projects are like that. Hitchcock used to say he got about 50% of what he envisioned. And I'm much more of a hands-on lead. I try not to have much to do with Excel sheets. If you get a chance to thumb through the new *Art of Uncharted 2* by Ballistic Publishing you'll see a ton of my art, from full blown tight concepts to design sketches and matte paintings.

"Hitchcock used to say he got about 50% of what he envisioned"

I've just got two words for you: Broadview Graphics. What's it all about and how did it spring into life?

That's an interesting story. A friend and I were lamenting how long it takes to make good, fully



Painted/rendered images. We said it would be so much simpler if we had a flat graphic style so I started experimenting. I've always loved film noir and Raymond Chandler so I invented my own line of detective fiction. The best thing I got out of it was it forced me to be a much better designer. By working so flat you're forced to really design the silhouette shape and you become very aware of designing shape for shape's sake. That is just as important in painting but it tends to get covered up by the modeling. Basically if it's interesting in black and white with no form it'll stay interesting as you layer on all the details.

Is there anything on the horizon for Broadview Graphics or is it all over now that you've established that flat graphic style you were after? Are we going to see your detective fiction gracing shop bookshelves any time in the future?

A story exec who I respect a lot approached me to develop it into a pitch. We hammered out a really nice watertight story. We pitched it around but it's pretty different so no takers. I was then talking to a publisher about doing a digital painting book and they saw the Broadview stuff and wanted to do a book on that. I spent thanksgiving and Christmas writing out the story





and painting new pieces. A week before I was to turn everything in the publisher cancelled... which was disappointing to say the least. One day.

I'm really sorry to hear that, Robh – I hope you go on to enjoy more success with your detective fiction and that silly publisher realizes what an

opportunity they missed! Now moving on to more personal subjects, your blog profile reveals some interesting facts about the man behind the art... your age is listed as 253 – typo or truth? And your favorite films include Sean Connery 007 films, *The Incredibles* and *The Piano* – quite a range there! Any thoughts on that? Ah yes, I remember the first Thanksgiving with

the Indians like it was yesterday [Laughs]. But seriously, I would have trouble naming my top 100 films there are so many. I just listed a few that came to mind. Good art is everywhere and as much as I like sci-fi I'm in awe of filmmakers like Ernst Lubitsch, Hal Ashby, Brad Bird, Andrew Stanton, Pete Docter, Coppola, Kubrick, Hitchcock, John Ford, Orson Welles... and







Rob
2009

the list goes on and on. I'm leaving out about 90% just because there isn't the space here. Also painters varying from Morgan Weistling, Frank Bramley, Stanhope Forbes and a few newer guys like David Jon Kassan and Robert Ferri. Plus all the known quantities like Sargent, Payne, Caravaggio, Church... etc.

"Working from life is the best trick there is"

You're obviously a total film-buff so I'm going to be mean and put you on the spot now: which film do you think has been the biggest inspiration to you in terms of your artwork? For pure design inspiration it's a toss-up between *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Blade Runner*. *2001* because photographically the effects, for the most part, still hold up. There's a "reality" to them and while digital effects now are far more sophisticated, sometimes there is a lack of visual unity to them. Sometimes but not always. *Blade Runner* was just so groundbreaking. The visual design of the overall is still, to this day, breathtaking. They are composed and lit like master paintings and that is one reason they still look timeless.

I talked earlier about the variety of images in your gallery and I even remember spotting a few iPhone sketches on your blog... and they were pretty damn good! So when most artists tend to stick to one or two styles, you seem to



have dabbled in a bit of everything at one time or another. It seems you've been focused pretty heavily on concept art recently though – could you tell us a little bit about the techniques and tricks you like to use? Like the "Sight-Size" technique – what's that all about? Sight size has been around for awhile. The idea is you set your canvas and the subject a distance away from you and then judge the shapes and values side by side. Sargent worked this way and that's why his paintings have such immediacy to them. It's truly reproducing the optical illusion in front of you. There're a couple of good websites and books about this subject;



I found Darren Rousar's books to be really insightful as well as Richard Whitney, whom I meet in New Hampshire when I lived there.

**“Love what you’re doing,
work really hard, be nice
and don’t give up”**

As to tricks, I think working from life is the best trick there is. That's where the real answers are; not in copying some concept guy who's copying some other concept guy. Get out there and struggle. It's not easy and I've flung many a canvas out, but it really is the answer. Look to

real light. See what real values are. Learn how to group and separate them from the millions that are in front of you into about ten distinct and five main values. That's where you'll discover your authentic self and develop the way you see the world.

Okay one last question before we wrap this up: if you had one piece of advice that you could offer aspiring artists trying to break into the industry, what would it be?

That would be the same for any profession. Love what you're doing, work really hard, be nice and don't give up. Art is hard and it is so

easy to get discouraged – I do – but you can't quit. It has to mean that much to you.

Robh Ruppel

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://www.robhruppel.com/>

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Interview by: Jo Hargreaves



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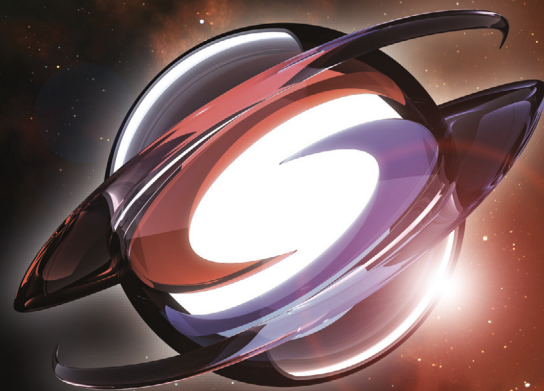
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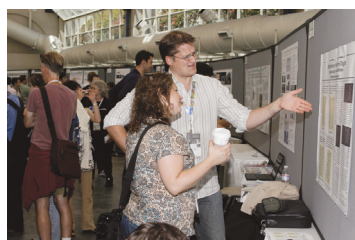
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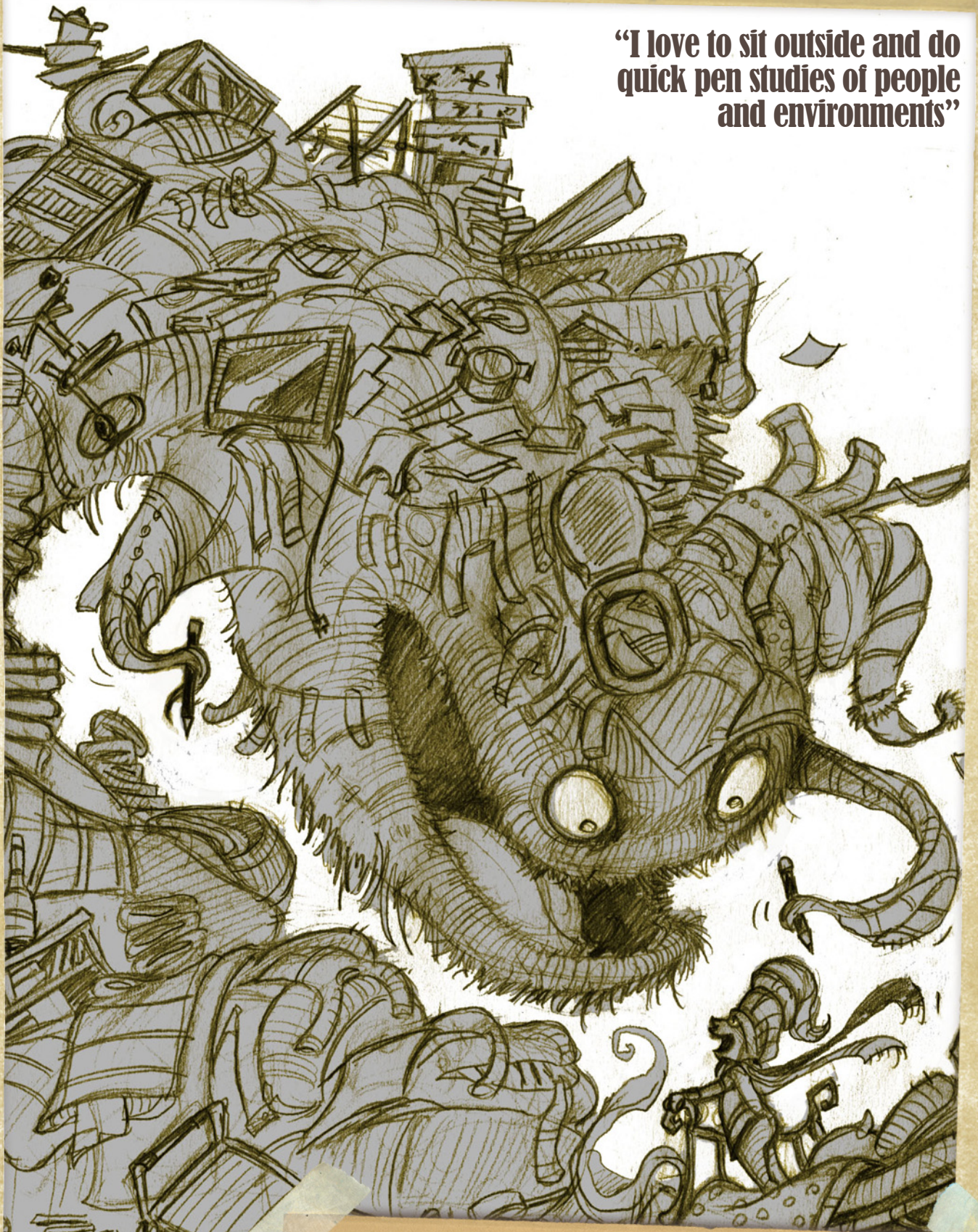
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**"I love to sit outside and do
quick pen studies of people
and environments"**



SKETCHBOOK OF EDWIN RHEMREV

This month's sketchbook artist is the excellent Edwin Remrev. Edwin shows us some of his great illustrative sketches and tells us how he draws inspiration from the things he sees round him, particularly on his commute to work. Read on to check out his unique style and excellent sketches.



SKETCHBOOK OF EDWIN RHEMREV

ABOUT

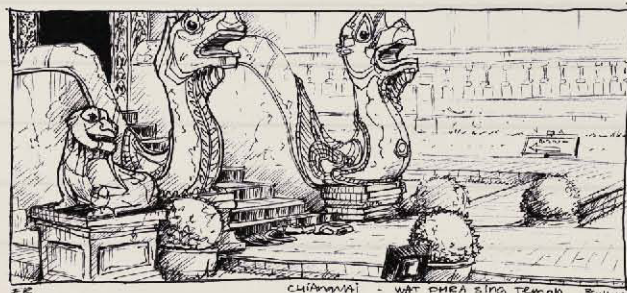
I'm Edwin Rhemrev, 31 years old, currently living in The Hague, The Netherlands. I'm currently employed as Lead Concept artist over at Triumph Studios, the game studio responsible for the PS3/XBOX360/PC games *Overlord* and *Overlord 2*. I started out as an concept intern many years ago, and basically never left.

EDUCATION

I have a Masters Degree in International Business and Languages. I studied these subjects before realizing that I wanted to pursue art as a career. After getting my degree, I quickly found out I wanted to do something with my art, and decided to enroll in Graphic Design and Visualization, which took me another three years to finish.

INSPIRATION

Besides games and art, I really love animation and everything to do with it. A big inspiration remains the many "making of" books I've collected over the years (70+ and still ordering more), with Disney's *Tarzan* and *Mulan* as my all time favorites.



ER

Chiangmai - Wat Phra Sing Temple 30.11.09



Fig.01

An art book I learned a lot from is *Dream Worlds* by Hans Bacher, which revolves around visual storytelling and how to evoke certain emotions and moods by mere composition of shots.

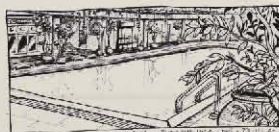
PEN SKETCHES

When developing a character or environment, I always start out by doing thumbnails in pen. It forces you to really think about the lines you're about to drop on paper, and makes you work faster and keep more focused. Or it does with me, at least.

Working directly in pen somehow makes my characters seem more lifelike. When drawing directly in ink, you can't go back. If a pose doesn't work, you have to redraw the whole pose again.

In pencil I would just keep erasing and redrawing one particular leg or arm or neck-tilt, sometimes so many times I ended up with eraser holes in my paper! Doing life sketches in pen helped me develop more natural poses, and learn to see the action lines within each movement of the body.

Although I don't do it as much as I should, I love to sit outside and do quick pen studies of people and environments. A good example is the sketch journal I kept on my travels through Thailand, where I met a lot of interesting people and saw a lot of inspirational locations (Fig.01).



Here are some studies I did of people
on my way to work (Fig.02)



Fig.02 rhemdoodles.blogspot.com

PERSONAL WORK

As most of my art done at Triumph Studios is for production purposes only, it'll never be released. Though this is a pity, it does motivate me to work more on personal projects; stuff I can show to family and friends.

Especially character design; this is something I love doing. There's nothing more fun than putting pen to paper and seeing characters come to life.

CARTOON BLOG

I'm not a writer, but do love to tell stories through my art. As an experiment I've recently started a cartoon blog, featuring cartoons about myself and what goes on in my mind. Kinda like a visual twitter. Check <http://pensketches.blogspot.com> if you're interested (Fig.03).



CHARACTER DESIGN

A good character design sketch to me is a character that has a unique and recognizable silhouette, drawn in a pose that immediately brings their personality and attitude across.

I firmly believe you have to get to know your character first before you can nail this one signature pose.

When I need to develop a new character for a game, I usually start out by doing loose and quick thumbnail sketches. I try to avoid drawing characters that just stand there and prefer to first flesh out the “in-game experience” of a character.

Instead of focusing on the exact design for their clothing, hair or weaponry, I visualize how the character comes across while playing the game; how the character moves, attacks, spawns, dies, etc. After I've visualized all stages of the character, and feel like I *know* the character a little bit better. Only then will I start working in detail.

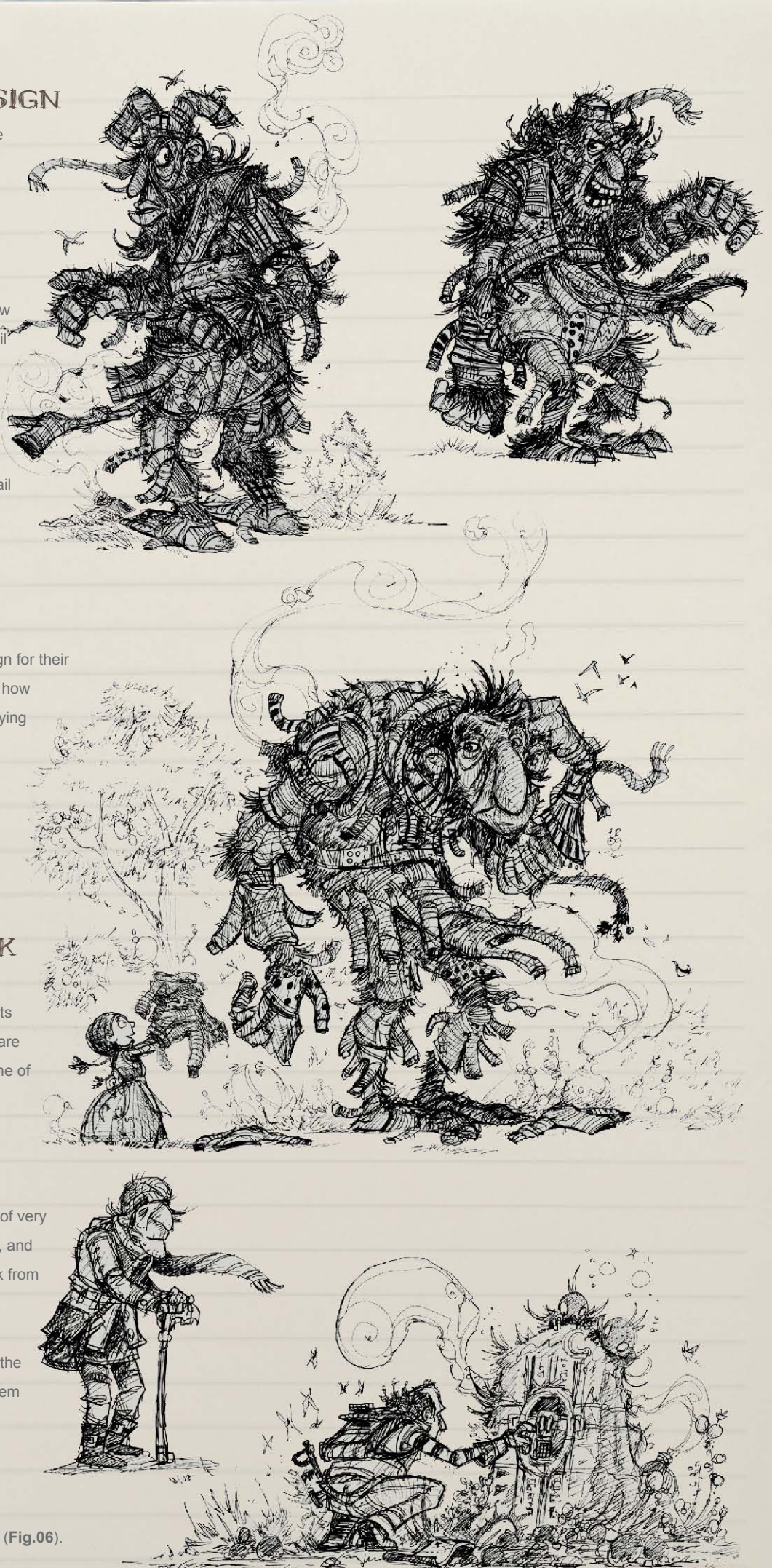
CHILDREN'S BOOK PROJECT

One of my many personal side projects is to develop a children's book. Here are some of the pen sketches I did of some of the characters (Fig.04 – 05).

Some that I have created so far are a giant who doesn't really understand why his clothes don't fit him; a bunch of very handy critters (my personal favorites), and the girl with the ponytails, which I took from my *Wizard of Oz* girl sketches.

I especially like the gritty feel I got by the crosshatching on the giants, giving them a nice ugly appearance.

As I had just discovered sketching directly in pen, I decided to try the same with environments for this book (Fig.06).



* TRIBE



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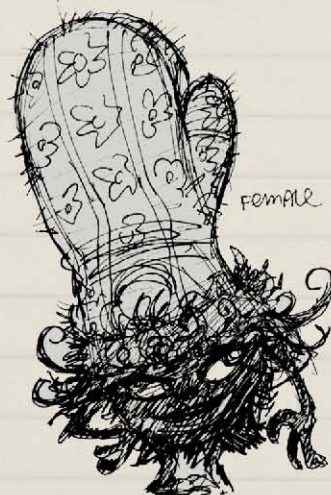
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mine!



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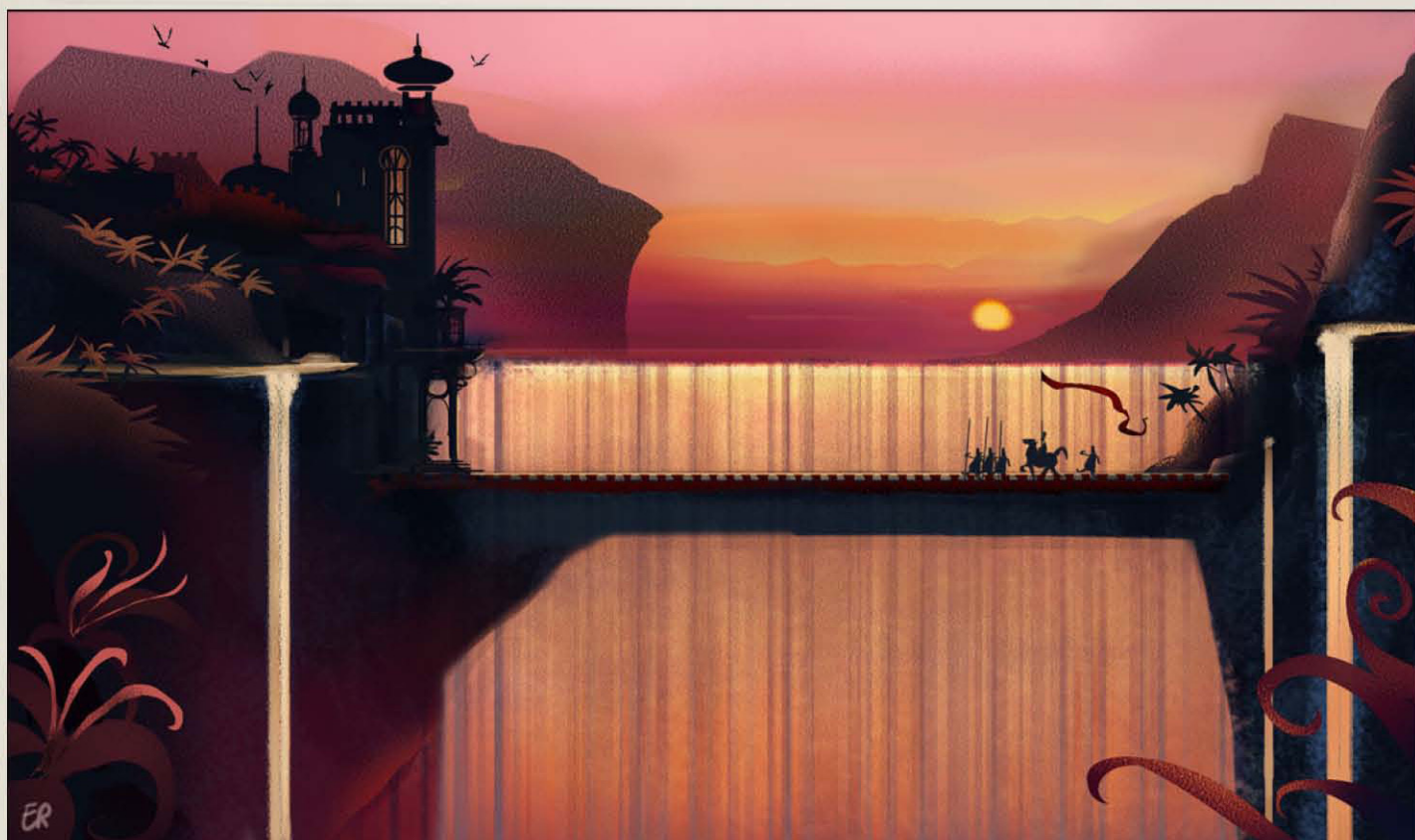


sock
boy

*







The focus was to experiment with compositions, and see how I could keep scenes as readable as possible. Thumbnails are about 10 x 3cm. I still plan on turning some these layouts into final illustrations, like this one (Fig.07).

I also took out my brush pen here, with which I created some cool grass and tree effects.

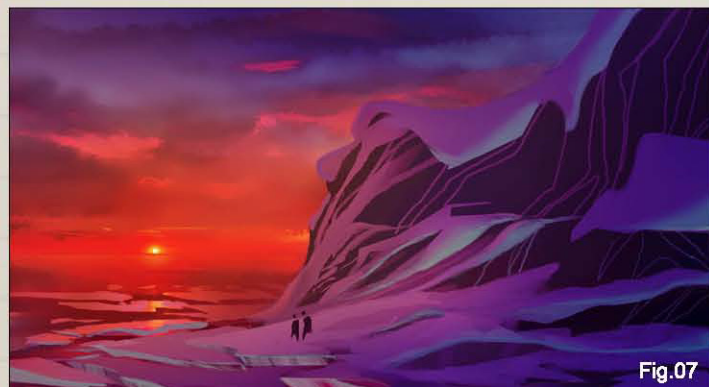
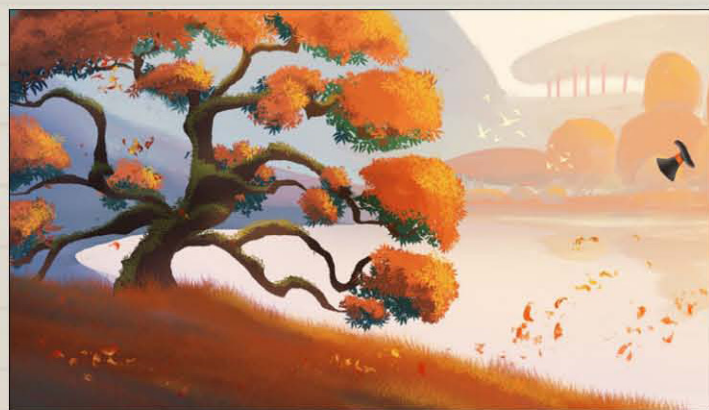
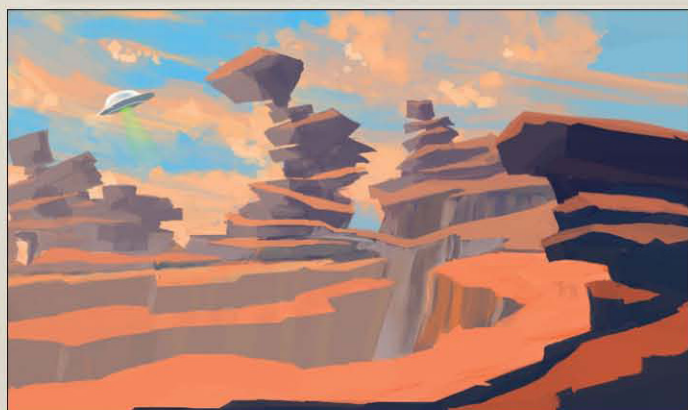


Fig.07

WIZARD OF OZ

To keep myself occupied on the train rides to work, I gave myself the assignment of redesigning the characters of *The Wizard of Oz* (Fig.08 – 10).

As with the life sketches, I used a 0.2 ink pen, and then Photoshop for the digital color. Drawing with pens somehow streamlines my thought process, and forces me to think more clearly about what I want to get on paper. If you're an artist, you should definitely give it a try sometime!

Designing Dorothy proved to be quite challenging, as you can end up with just some random kid quite easily. I eventually stumbled upon the pigtails to the side, which create a strong silhouette and give her attitude at the same time.

I have got to work on my personal *Wizard of Oz* project some more. On the next page are the thumbnails for the Tin Man, which is such a great character to explore! A big inspiration was the Blue Sky Studios movie *Robots*; for those who haven't seen it, go watch it now!

I tried to keep the Tin Man's face as human as possible (except for the TV head), so it'll allow for a wide range of expressions.





Fig.09

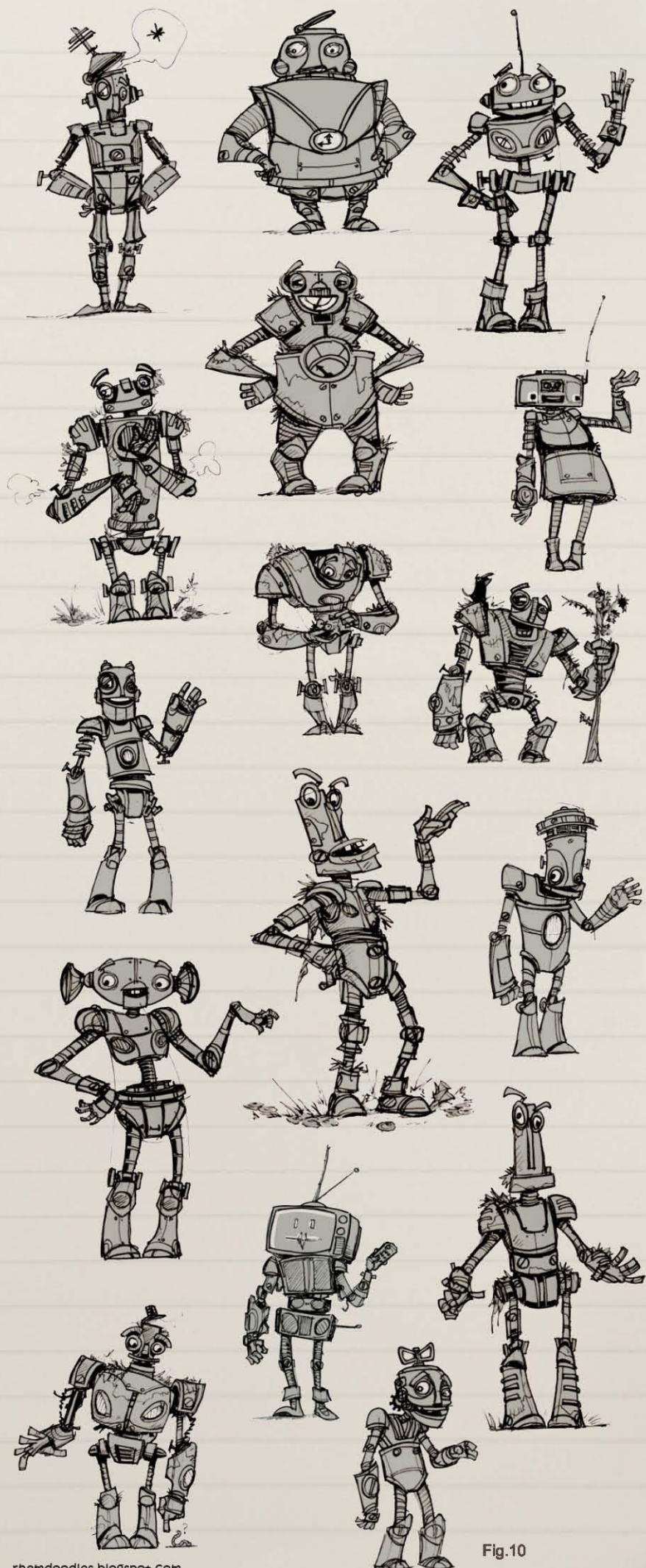


Fig.10

TECH SKETCHES

Another thing I've been working on. These are props I started developing after I got stuck with a character design that featured an inventor. Knowing what kind of inventions my character does enabled me to continue with the character design process, and made it more focused. I'm still tweaking the character design itself; you'll have to keep an eye on my blog to find out how she looks.

Props and characters that are set in the 50s are a very interesting area design-wise (Fig.11).

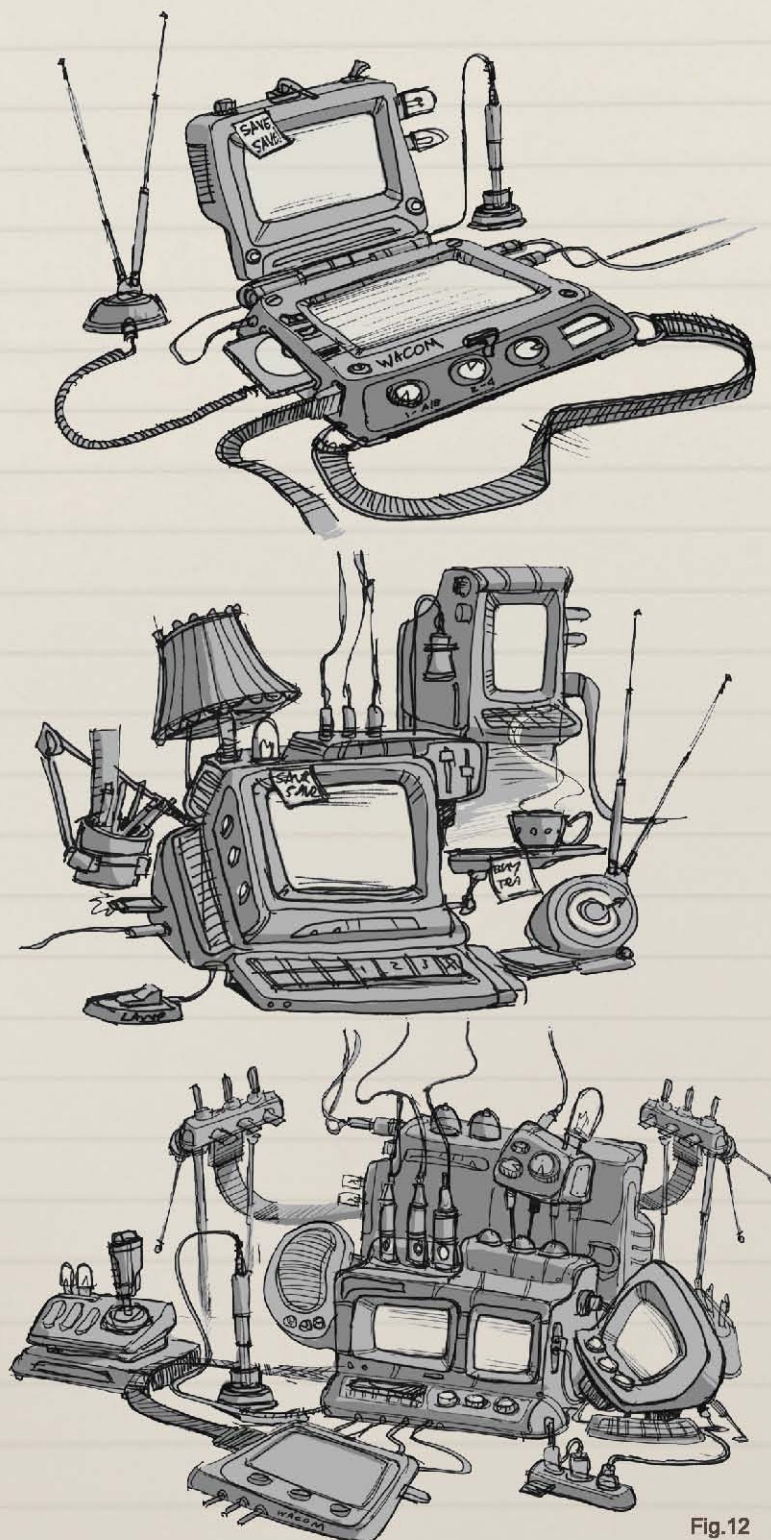


Fig.12

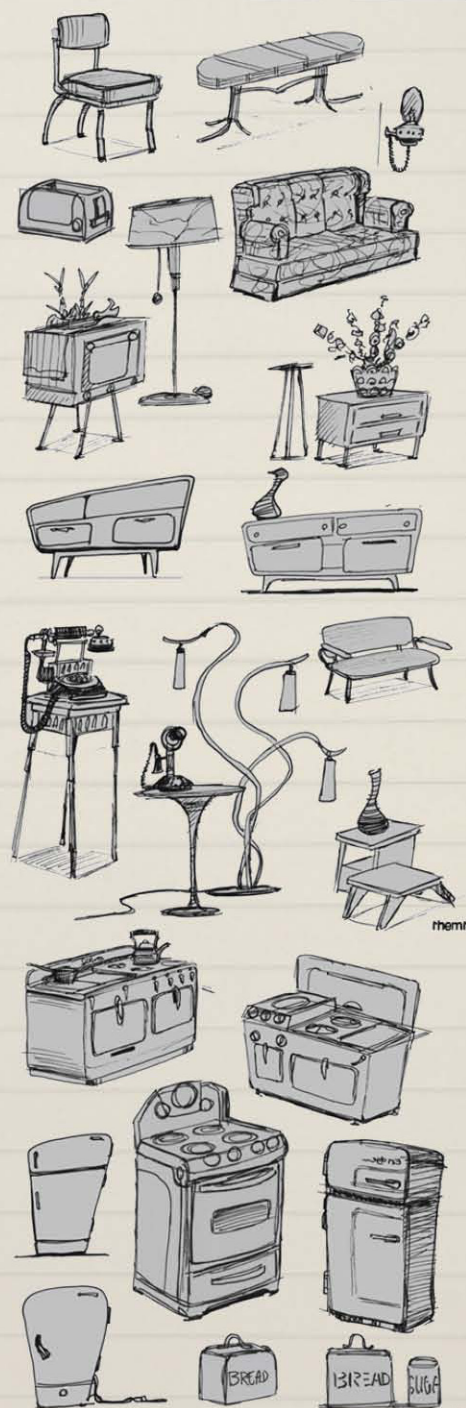


Fig.11

To get into the right mindset, I started out with quick style study sketches of 50s furniture and tech (Fig.12).

With what I learned from my studies, I started developing these tech sketches. My approach was to see what technology like a laptop, Wacom tablet and internet would look like if they were invented in the 50s. I tried to keep things recognizable by incorporated old monitors, joysticks, antenna, big buttons, light bulbs and even a lightshade.

PENCIL SKETCHES

I admit it, I like pirates! Here are some sketches I did for fun, trying to come up with a wide variety of personalities and expressions. I especially like how the pirate fight sketch turned out, which I ended up giving away as a present to my girlfriend's dad (Fig.13 – 15).



Fig.13



Fig.14



Fig.15

I'm not a very tidy person. Therefore, my house is quite a mess... which inspired this drawing (Fig.16).



rhemrev.com

Fig.16

I looked around my living room, and started wondering what it would look like if all my clothes, furniture and other stuff would suddenly come alive... I know, quite an unusual thought, but I guess my brain just

works that way. This, combined with the fact that I also like drawing kids and flying beds and wonky stairs, meant the drawing came out pretty well - enjoy!

I like drawing parades. This was another one of those drawings that started out as a doodle, and evolved from there. It now hangs on the wall at my parents' place (I give away quite a lot of my art as I don't do much with it myself) (Fig.17).



rhemdoodles.blogspot.com

Fig.17



Fig.18

Here is a colored version of the messy monster sketch. I revised it and painted over it for an online art competition (Fig.18).

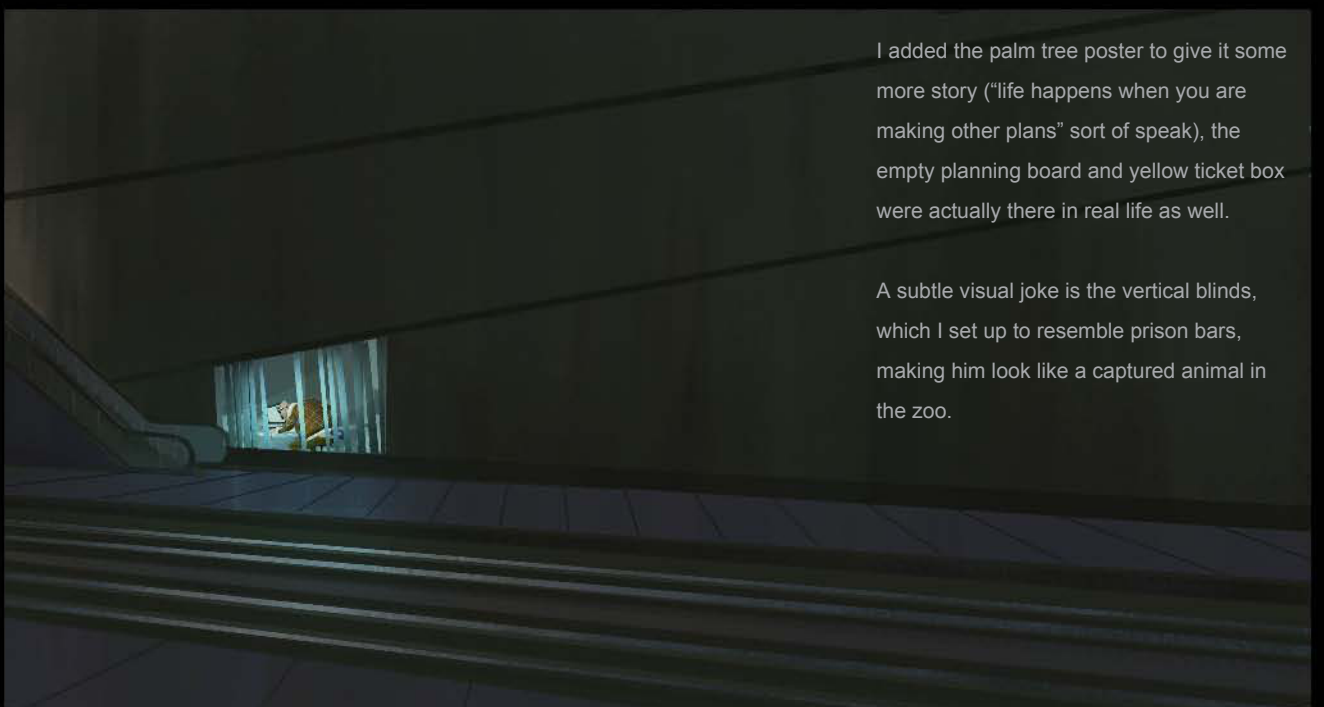
ESCALATOR MAN

Each day I go to work by subway and as I exit the subway station I pass by this oddly located

workspace, situated at the start of the escalator at subway station Spui, The Hague.

Fig.19 is dedicated to the man under the escalator! I didn't notice it for weeks, probably like most of the thousands and thousands of commuters that pass by this guy's office, day in,

day out. As I took a peek through the blinds, I was overwhelmed with a feeling of sadness; a rather old man was sitting behind his tiny screen, boxed in by walls. That feeling of sadness and isolation I've tried to capture in these location visuals.



I added the palm tree poster to give it some more story ("life happens when you are making other plans" sort of speak), the empty planning board and yellow ticket box were actually there in real life as well.

A subtle visual joke is the vertical blinds, which I set up to resemble prison bars, making him look like a captured animal in the zoo.

Here's a contribution I did for a comic project called *Fairytales in the Future*. I could draw whatever I wanted, so I thought I'd do my take on a futuristic Peter Pan, where Hook seriously upgraded himself to finally catch Peter (**Fig.20**). This was done with Photoshop and Painter.





Fig.20

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Blasphemous Dreams

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(Above)

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(Below)





Ominous Wind

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Splosh

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PAINTING FANTASY MEDIEVAL SCENES



This series of tutorials will be split over six separate chapters, all sharing the common theme of a fantasy inspired medieval scene at its heart. Each will be undertaken by a different artist and draw upon a wealth of experience and skills perfected over years of industry practice. The authors will discuss their approach to digital /concept painting, the tools and brushes they employ and treat us to a valuable look into their artistic process. The six installments will cover a different environment each month based upon the above theme and encompass a multitude of professional tips and techniques.

The importance of researching topics through to sketching and exploring ideas will feature alongside methods used to build and refine detail. These will form an integral part of the series and through comparison we shall be afforded a comprehensive insight into the world of the digital artist.

- Chapter 1** | Market - Jan 2010
- Chapter 2** | City on Stilts - Feb 2010
- Chapter 3** | Slums - Mar 2010
- Chapter 4** | Excalibur - Apr 2010
- Chapter 5** | Mountain City - May 2010
- Chapter 6** | Docks - June 2010 - this month

Painting Fantasy Medieval Scenes Chapter 6: Docks

Software Used: Photoshop

The brief to paint a medieval fantasy scene depicting a dock did not have any specific elements besides having to be just what the description asked for. This was great of course, as it meant I could paint anything that popped into my head. Since Lisbon is my hometown I drew a lot of inspiration from there. However, for my main inspiration I went a little further East to Istanbul, a city very similar to Lisbon but with a much more oriental feeling. I have actually never been there but imagery retained in my mind from books and the internet influenced me a lot.

Being a "fantasy" medieval scene I tried to spice everything up by exaggerating the scale of the architecture and coming up with different designs based on real ones. To complement the scene I wanted a dramatic sunset, to bring in warmth and soft contrasts. The final ingredient, something inherent to maritime scenes, would be the reflections on the sea. I love the contrast of defined forms above the sea and washed blurred reflections below, which are gradually lost into one dark value.

I start off in Photoshop with a 1000px wide grey canvas. Starting in gray has the advantage of not introducing too much contrast in the line work, which makes it easier to change

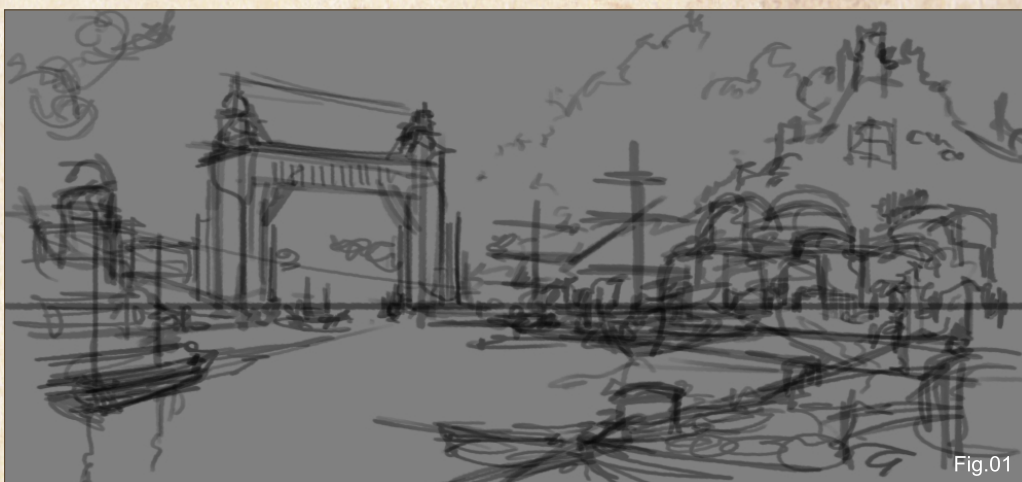


Fig.01



Fig.02

things. It also gives you the ability to add the highlights after the lower range of the values are established. I usually go for fast thick lines first when quickly sketching in perspective. My main concern is to get a nice composition by achieving a balance between all the elements: a giant archway, a busy city, a castle on a hill and a platform in the lower right of the scene (Fig.01).

After doubling the resolution to 2000px I introduce lighting by working the values. I work with larger brushes at medium opacity. This way I can slowly develop the forms and also gradually hide the line work beneath. The main aim here is to place the sun behind the portico, making it backlit, which in turn creates more contrast and makes it the focal point of the piece (Fig.02).



Fig.03

Still developing the grayscale, I start to paint with large soft edged brushes and apply gradients with the Gradient tool (100% black to transparent). I use this to darken the lower and the right third of the image in order to draw even more attention to the archway. As you can see, I also gradually work with smaller tipped brushes to start developing all the details. It's important to do this over the entire image and not concentrate on just one part. Try not to zoom in too much keeping the whole image visible most of the time (Fig.03).



Fig.04

I also build some perspective guidelines on a separate layer using the Line tool. It is very important to follow a rigid perspective structure as the human eye can easily detect flaws.

The next “character” that comes into play is color to help emphasize the mood already established with value. I introduce new layers in various modes (Overlay, Soft Light and Color Dodge) and use large soft edged brushes with low saturated colours. This helps me slowly build up the effect while retaining the overall look of the previous step without making drastic changes (Fig.04).

I resize the image to the final 4000px resolution. I keep slowly defining the edges of the silhouettes which still retain a lot of the rough sketch from the initial stages. I also start introducing more intricate details like windows, ropes and small spires. I want to point out that this whole image was slowly developed over several days, which gave me a lot of intervals where I could evaluate the preceding step before I continued painting. The more pauses you take the more it will help you to achieve a successful piece (Fig.05).

The changes made to the image are getting smaller and less obvious. However, it also



Fig.05



Fig.06

starts taking longer to develop the image. That more or less defines my painting process (and probably that of most artists): fast and brutal in the beginning, slow and delicate at the end.

Notice how I start to bring in the detail in the structures on the hill by lighting the planes hit

by direct light from the sun. Even if you are not developing all the details of what you are portraying, if you can focus on the main ones then the viewer will complete the rest in their mind (Fig.06).

This step may look like a step backward, but I have to simplify things by washing out the detail in some areas that I want to develop further. First I create a clean base to start introducing the elements that will go on top in the near and far dock platforms. I also rework the placement and scale of the ships in an attempt to balance the composition. Now that I look back at it, I probably should not have erased one of the ships in the background; it added more depth and made the three ships look too evenly spaced out. This is a good example of when a pause can help you evaluate a painting and point out the flaws (**Fig.07**).

Next I use a Color Balance Adjustment layer to boost the contrast and saturation. I introduce colder hues in the shadows and warmer ones in the highlights. I continue developing the planes hit by direct light and introduce more details to the whole scene like the floating debris in the water for example (**Fig.08**).

In this step I introduce a lot of intricate detail to the dock platforms. They don't have to be completely defined, just as long as they give an idea of what might be happening there. I do this mainly by painting just the area of the objects hit by direct light and not worrying about the areas in shadow (**Fig.09**).

Almost there! This is a cleaning up stage where I wash out some of the areas that I don't want to draw attention to. I also introduce more contrast by using a new layer in Color Dodge mode and paint to enhance the light hitting the objects. Remember to use dark saturated colours first and then slowly use lighter ones without burning the image too much. I believe this glow effect can be very successful in areas of contrast like the edge of the backlit dome of the archway (**Fig.10**).

A final evaluation of the image makes me remove some highlights in the shadows and introduce some sun rays. On a new layer I make selections with the Polygonal Lasso tool that



Fig.07



Fig.08



Fig.09



Fig.10

"radiate" from the sun. Then I gradually build up the effect by using a soft edged brush at very low opacity (Fig.11).

I hope this tutorial will help you in trying to come up with your own fantasy medieval scenes. Remember not to be disheartened - I started this painting three times before getting to the one you see here...

Andreas Rocha

For more from this artist visit:
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Fig.11


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Epitomised by Clockwork Steampunk as the main visual theme

Chapter 4: Diesel

Epitomised by late Industrial Revolution where diesel powers everything

Chapter 5: D'Inginis - Continues in the July 2010 Issue

Final leg of tour looks at both the heart of realm of D'Machinis & Inginis - meaning Machines & engines respectively.

PAINTING FUTURISTIC CITIES



This tutorial series will be made up of six chapters exploring the creation of Futuristic Cities. Each chapter will be tackled by a different artist, who will use their boundless skill and experience to guide you through all the necessary aspects of creating your Futuristic City. Our artists will guide you step by step through the process, starting by sketching and creating your ideas, they then will show you how to incorporate the specific themes of their topic chapter to show a different aspect to the Futuristic City.

Chapter 1 | Issue 052 Mar 2010 | Wealthy City

Chapter 2 | Issue 052 Apr 2010 | Docks

Chapter 3 | Issue 053 May 2010 | Skyscrapers and flying traffic

Chapter 4 | Issue 054 Jun 2010 | Slum City

Chapter 5 | Issue 055 Jul 2010 | Bazaar/ indoor market place

Chapter 6 | Issue 056 Aug 2010 | Aerial shot over a city at sunset

“This is more a mood piece that’s meant to tell a narrative, not really something for a modeler to build from”

Chapter 4 - Slum City

Software used: Corel Painter 11 & Photoshop

Futuristic slums? Sound almost like an oxymoron. Nonetheless, it's fair to assume that one day they might very well be a reality; unless we achieve some glorious hedonistic society, the chance is that a large portion of the earth's population will be living in them. Cheerful thought I know, but I doubt it'll be as bad as it sounds. We human beings have an uncanny way of adapting and personalizing the space which we inhabit. The people living in these slums might not witness digital streams of cash flow in to their bank accounts, but they will be human beings who work, dream, produce and play. With this piece, I don't want to simply bang together the idea of a "slum" and the "future"; instead I want to create an environment of the future that looks as if it's been lived in. One that suffers from poverty but nonetheless is alive and has its own charm. A place where higher members of society would not want to live, but might visit if they were feeling adventurous. So let's see if I can pull it off!

My first objective is to establish an interesting composition, one that will engage the viewer for more than a millisecond. That's why sketches are so useful. Keep them broad, keep them messy, keep them however you like, just make sure not to take too long on them. Remember, this is mainly to establish the bare bones of your actual piece (**Fig.01**).

I decide I want to aim for a somewhat oppressive setting by both pushing the scale and also utilizing the borders in order to make the viewer sort of feel pressed in upon. I



Fig.03b

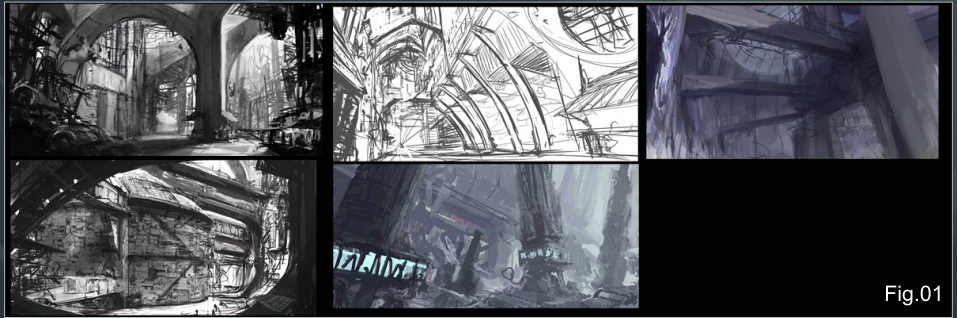


Fig.01

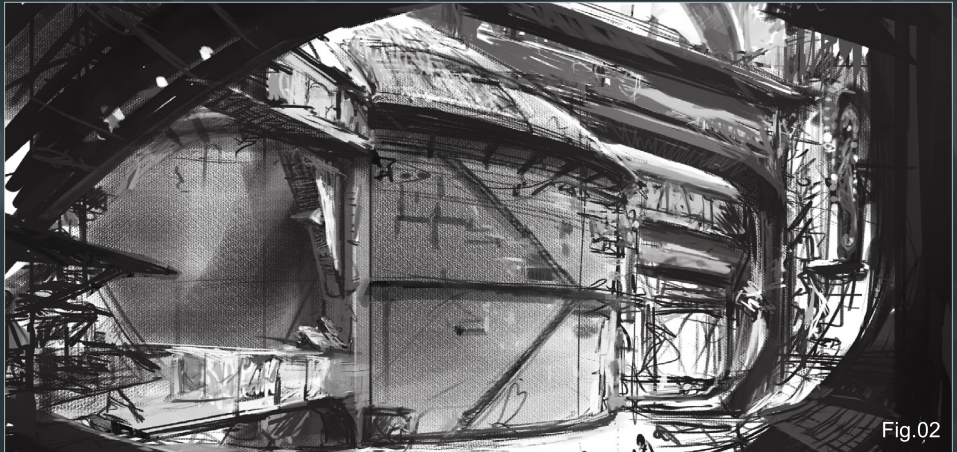


Fig.02



Fig.03a

imagine this as government housing that is built to vast proportions and sort of all piled in a semi-pit to literally keep the "refuse" out of the higher levels. The only official way out of this area is through heavily guarded tunnels.

Alright, as you can see this is the sketch I end up with after mixing it with a few of the other sketches. As I said, just keep it loose and sketchy. I'm painting in Corel Painter 11, using a regular hard edged Airbrush and pumping up the Grain, varying the grain size depending on how close I get to the foreground (Grain larger the closer we get). To access the Papers

window in Painter (this is where you can adjust the grain) go to Window > Library Palettes > Show Paper (**Fig.02**).

Note: I'll give you a heads up when I switch to Photoshop.

Using some great resources from 3DTotal's free texture site (<http://freetextures.3dtotal.com/>) I then create a black and white collage that resembles rundown huts. I do this very quickly because this is only intended as a place mat to expand on and paint over later until it's been pretty much eradicated (**Fig.03a – 03b**).



Fig.04

I then bring the collage into the final sketch, placing it on its own layer. I position it over the mid ground tenement and set the layer it was on to Overlay. From there, I fiddle with it until I'm pleased with what I've got. I then flatten the layer down (Layers > Drop) and continue to paint over the tenement until I'm happy.

Things are looking a little dry, so I decide to extend the composition horizontally, thus giving it a wider format and cinematic feel. I also add machinery and buildings to the side foreground, further pushing the depth and hopefully increasing interest (**Fig.04**).

It's not important to make sense of all that's there. This is more a mood piece that's meant to tell a narrative; not really something for a modeler to build from, so don't feel you need to explain everything. Just make sure that



Fig.05

as a whole it all makes enough sense to be believable.

Next I start to think about the color pallet. Still sticking to the Airbrush and varying between hard edge and soft edge, I'm thinking of a somewhat polluted setting, with high contrasts of light and shadows, as if everywhere you look there is either a blinding glare or a dusky murk. I'm hoping it'll sell both the vibrancy and the

muck of the place, as a result establishing a unique atmosphere (**Fig.05**).

For color, I paint on a new layer and vary the blending of the layer between Normal, Multiply, Overlay and Soft Light, depending on what best suits my needs. Always feel free to experiment, especially in your own pieces because it'll help remind you who you are doing this for in the first place: yourself. It'll also let you enjoy the process that much more!



Fig.06

Okay, you are going to see a lot of this as the project evolves; me fiddling with the composition, shifting, changing, balancing, re-balancing. In this case I enlarge the mid ground, and continue to work on the colors. To the background horizon, I'm thinking of soaring skyscrapers that loom over the whole area, like great sentinels blocking out the sun... yeah, happy days (**Fig.06**)!

Painting Futuristic Cities

Chapter 4: Slum City



So as promised earlier, I'm continuing to fiddle with the composition. I've also decided to start bringing in some of the human charm, placing a neon sign to the left, it'll be some sort of a one man fish shop being run from a junk heap of machinery. Actually it looks like two turbines ... well whatever, I like it (**Fig.07**).

Currently I am trying to keep my lighting focused to the centre right; hopefully this will continue...

Here there is further cleaning up, and additional colors added. I get rid of the foreground tunnel. I think it did a good job of adding depth and some dynamic, but I feel that I need to expose the courtyard to some sky otherwise it feels a little too depressing. It's difficult to stick with your initial ideas sometimes; I was appreciating that tunnel, but I just couldn't make it seem somehow more uplifting than an open sky (even if it is now populated by two fat silos) (**Fig.08**).

So what would a seedy part of town be without at least one billboard of a scantily clad female?! In this case, since it's the future, it's a scantily clad hologram of a female. Bask in the sweet progress of technology (**Fig.09**).



Fig.07



Fig.08



Fig.09

I've outlined in separate thumbnails the breakdown of how I decide to paint her.

First I start with an off-blue, white and semi hard Airbrush. I want to make her look provocative but not straight up slutty (**Fig.10**).

Now, on an underlying layer, I sketch out some flowing hair, erasing it out a bit just to make it feel a little sketchy. On an overlay layer I make

some broken up diagonal lines, I'm hoping these will sufficiently indicate the kind of holographic images we're all familiar with - the ones that are kind of grainy and all broken up by static (**Fig.11**).

And then on a new top layer set to overlay I add the final glow, really saturating the blue, making it glow (**Fig.12**).

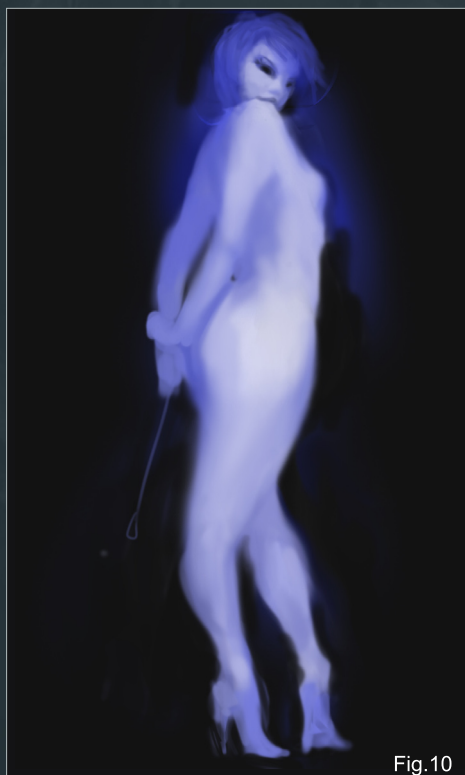


Fig.10

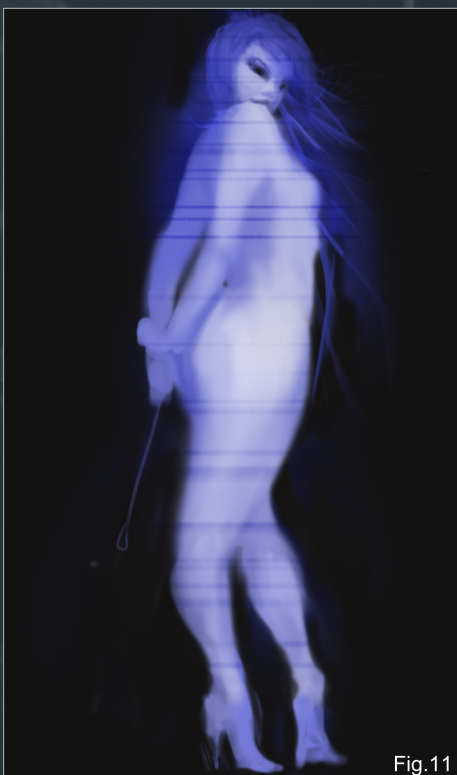


Fig.11



Fig.12

There you have it. Later on I might go in and further punch up the brightness, but that's still to be seen depending on how the piece develops. I didn't take very long on her; didn't want her feeling to well refined, I think it might work against the holographic sort of airy feel I'm going for.

I decide to accentuate the girl with some neon lights, trying to establish a mood here of entertainment as well, even if it might be seedy entertainment (Fig.13).

Also I add "John" to John's Fish Emporium. Little human beings can really bring life to a piece. Use them wisely though. They can also detract from a finished environment, if they draw the viewer's attention more than the environment itself does.

Finally, I'm defining the back buildings, making them slant in so as to give a feeling that they're pressing down upon us.

Okay, now I add some smaller detail and add haze to the "Entertainment District" simply by bringing the Airbrush's opacity to 20% and choosing a soft edge. Then feel free to glaze to your heart's content until you think you've established enough of an atmosphere (Fig.14).

I use this same process for bringing in the smoke emanating from the tenements, except this time I raise the opacity to 60%. I feel the smoke drives the point home that

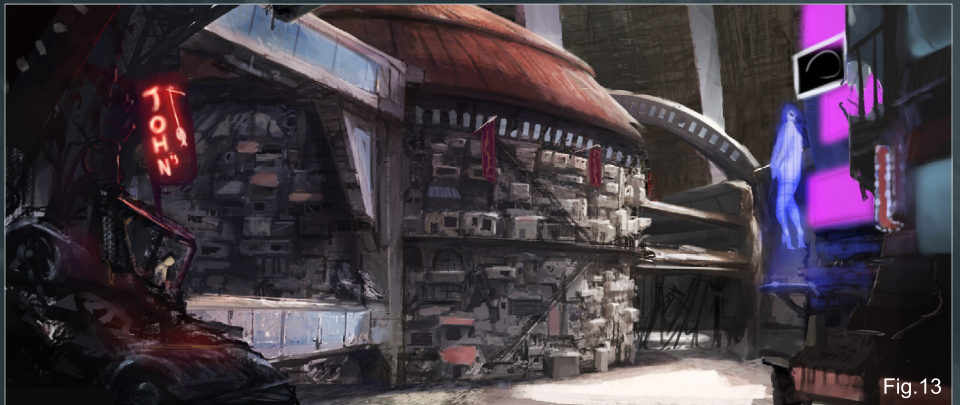


Fig.13



Fig.14

these buildings are lived in. It reminds me of cooking and the aromas that accompany such memories, which will hopefully allow the viewer to relate to the piece better and make it more tangible for them. The smoke also allows for a greater sense of atmosphere.

Finally, I use the black and white collage from Fig.03 and apply it liberally to the background skyscrapers, using the same method as before. I then paint it further after dropping the layer down, making them look rundown but structured.

Okay, Now I've transferred over to Photoshop CS4, mainly because when it comes to many layers I find Photoshop handles the load better than Corel Painter. On the other hand, I do feel that Corel Painter is superior at mimicking the visceral qualities of traditional mediums, so yes they really do have their own pros and cons. It's up to you to decide which better works for you (Fig.15).

Anyhow, time for a little more charm... in the form of a giant metallic arm!

Not sure what exactly it is but I want to bring some quirky menace into the piece, so I throw this arm coming off top of the screen to visit John's Fish Emporium. I make sure it's reflecting the light from all of the surrounding sources well enough to stick out. Things are getting rather cluttered and it's becoming a balancing act between detail and clarity for me.

I also include happy patrons at John's; obviously one of them has seen the arm, but whether or not he's ridged like that because he's pooping



Fig.15

Painting Futuristic Cities

Chapter 4: Slum City



himself with fear or if in fact he's simply resentful of the machine's sterile coldness, we'll never know.

It's easy enough to bring drama even to a small scale like this when you utilize harsh lights and shadows. A much grandeur example of this can be found in Baroque paintings where sometimes the greatest of tension was caught by just using one light source appropriately and letting the rest be enveloped by dark shadows. A great example of this is Caravaggio, the tennis-playing-ruffian-master-painter.

I further spruce up the lights around the hologram (same technique as before - Overlay or Soft light layer on top and paint!!)

I also forgot to mention this earlier, but I added some purple lights to the left of the screen as well, to tie in the two sides of the painting a little better. It's a simple technique if you feel your piece isn't unifying well.

I refine the background buildings by creating a simple repeating square pattern and overlaying it over the shapes of the sky scrapers. Then I choose the option Lock Transparent Pixels from the top of the Layers window in PS. This constricts me to paint only within the shapes I

have on that particular layer. In this case, I can now paint right into the windows but can't paint outside of their borders (Fig.16).

So now it's all refinement. I paint in much more of the populace, making sure to give them shadows to ground them. Of course I have to include flying transports because in the future you always have to have flying cars; it's a staple (Fig.17).

Also, I decide to make the metallic arm more of a figure; creepier like that.

I also change the buildings on the right because I'm thinking they're too cluttered so I simplify them and give the suggestion of a window.

The final significant phase for this piece is to create a new layer, make sure it's on the top of all of the mid-ground layers and, using the Airbrush tool at about 15% opacity and a soft edge, glaze over the mid-ground with yellows and oranges to give it some atmosphere and help further divide it from the foreground.

Following that it's just a case of continuing with minor refinements until I arrived to the finished work you see here!

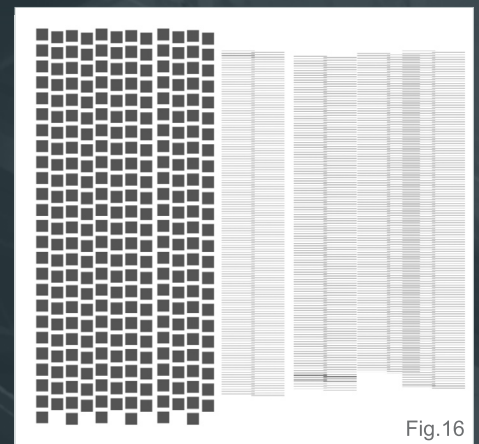


Fig.16

I suppose this about wraps it up folks. The piece is resolved well enough. It tells a story and hopefully is engaging enough to hold the viewer's attention for at least a few seconds.

There's still some other things I'd like to do to it, but isn't that always the case?

Anyhow, hope you enjoyed and if you have any questions feel free to drop me a line. Beaming out!

Branko Bistrovic

For more from this artist visit:

[http://www.brushdreams.com/brankosfurnace.](http://www.brushdreams.com/brankosfurnace.swf)

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Fig.17





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PAINTING MONSTERS

“Color and composition are the first things people see when they look at an image, and the silhouette is the key to defining a creature”

This series of tutorials will be split over six separate chapters all of which will be dedicated to painting monsters suited to a range of habitats spanning jungle and aquatic to mountainous and subterranean. Each will be covered by a different author and will discuss their approach to digital /concept painting, the tools and brushes they employ and culminating in a final image. We shall gain an insight into the thought processes of each of our industry professionals and the ways in which they develop an idea from concept sketches through to a finished work. In particular we will be shown some of the considerations that are necessary to designing both imaginative and fantastic creatures that still remain plausible and abide by anatomical and evolutionary laws observed in nature.

Each tutorial will focus on a specific environment as its theme and therefore result in a varied collection of monster designs, providing a well rounded look into the world of the digital artist and the numerous tips and techniques used by proven individuals.



Chapter 6 - Volcanic

Software used: Photoshop

Kirin:

To make a convincing creature, good anatomy and a good dynamic pose will help a lot. In this tutorial I'm going to cover eight steps that explain the different stages of this painting. I'm working in Photoshop for this design, which has the great advantage of the Brush Panel and while the program can't handle hard and soft edges at the same time, you can combine two or more strokes to achieve the same thing.

Step 1:

Color and composition (if it is for a creature it will be silhouette) are the first things people see when they look at an image, and the silhouette is the key to defining a creature or monster early on. A good way of doing this is to create several different small thumbnails and pick one from them, which you will see many concept artists or illustrators doing. It's a good idea to keep working in grayscale at this stage, since it is easier to deal with form, lines, and shapes (Fig.01a).

There are two types of brushes involved in the sketch (Fig.01b). One has texture and a rough edge and one is the regular round default brush which is good for blending and soft lines. There is no detail or much lighting as the silhouette should have enough information to indicate what the creature looks like and give an impression of its movement.



Fig.01a

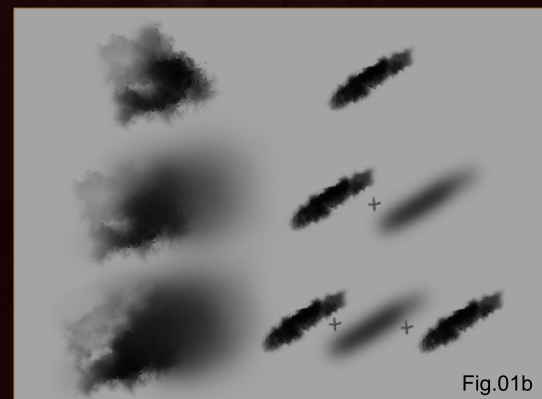


Fig.01b



Fig.02

Step 2:

Keep refining the silhouette until it looks right (Fig.02). I add more details and define the face and feet more. It is very important to place all the parts in the right perspective. Rotate the canvas, or even turn it upside down; this will help you to get a fresh look at the image and the problem areas will show.

This image and the concept remind me of the ancient Chinese creatures called Kirin and one of the types of Kirin lived in volcanic areas, so I start to research some reference images of Kirin to help me define the detail and shape more. I find some interesting things from reference photos, such as how they define the scales on the Kirin's skin, and which color they apply

on the surface. However I won't start the color version just yet, so for now I continue with the sketch, correcting some proportion and anatomy problems. I also keep the creature on an layer which is separate from the background since this will make it easier for me to paint the background later.

Step 3:

Besides the shape and design of the creature, lighting and value are the focus of this step.

Just a couple of simple perspective lines help to make the space clearer. Lighting is all about rendering skills and the only way to get better is to do more long pose drawings or paintings from life, which can be still life or human figures. By doing more drawings and observing life you can make the lighting in your work more realistic. The perspective lines also show the right leg of the creature was off in Fig.02 so I fix that too (Fig.03).



Fig.03



Fig.04

Step 4:

This step focuses on the background and for this background I create a special brush. The base image of the brush is a cloud, and so I call it the Cloud brush. Since the environment is supposed to be hot lava and smoke, the Cloud brush is perfect. In this step the image flow and composition are what I really care about, since this will change the whole painting dramatically. No matter how good the silhouette is, if the background is not handled well the foreground creature may become lost in its environment.

This step basically defines the whole look of the final images. The only missing part now is the color, so color is the next thing I'm going to focus on (Fig.04).

Step 5:

Like traditional painting, before moving on to the processes like under-painting etc, the first step is to fill the color without modifying the value too much. The majority of the color will be black, dark blue and red. A good fire color involves hue changes, which are from red and purple to light yellow (dark to light) (Fig.05a).

I also add scales onto the Kirin. I do this by using a reference image of a crocodile (Fig.05b) which I took from a museum in Chicago. The High-Pass filter in Photoshop can filter out large color and value changes and keep the small details, and this is perfect for overlay. In the left side of the painting I also add the dark blue sky and some landscape shapes which can help the



Fig.05a

depth of the scene and also help the scale of the painting.

Step 6:

Here is another way of using layer blending and "Lighten" (**Fig.06a**). Since the painting is very dark, any fire reference photo can be used directly on top of it and the fire will be seen and anything darker than the painting will be ignored. The fire layer is another big change for the whole painting since the hue and the brightness are very intense. This will change the composition of the whole painting again. It is always good to compare what you are working on to the previous incarnation of the painting, and **Fig.04** is a good reference image for me if I choose to adjust the composition back to the way it was (**Fig.06b**).

Step 7:

The fire added in **Fig.07** changed the composition a lot, so in this step I focus on the fire itself (this is kind of similar to Step 4, apart from the fact that in Step 4 it is in black and white). In this stage, red, yellow and dark blue are the major colors involved. Sometimes it is hard to see the color and value at the same time. Specular is also another cool technique for the final touches which cannot be used everywhere, but can be used for the most



Fig.05b



Fig.06a



Fig.06b

important areas, such as the eyes and the scales in the highlight area. One thing that is easily ignored when people start to put detail on is that when we put detail on highlights or shadows, sometimes it changes the value of a

big portion and loses the volume of the main object. Here I can see that the detail which I'm painting on the creature is making the Kirin become a little bit flat so I brighten the center of body to make the creature look more solid and more 3D.

Step 8:

Usually I won't go back to the final touches phase, but with this image I found details everywhere that lacked interesting shapes and details, such as the background, the scales on the shoulder and the Kirin's face. Putting higher contrast lines in works and more rendering work on the face enhances the face of the creature and I also flip the image upside down to make sure the elements I just put in actually help.

For me all the processes I did here and there were more like a balance game and the more elements I put into the painting, the harder it was to make everything balance (**Fig.08**).



Fig.07

Wei-Che Juan

For more from this artist contact them at:

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**“When drawing the first thumbnail,
I don’t worry about accuracy,
anatomy or even composition”**

DUST

MAKING OF BY CHASE STONE

Chase Stone shares with us how he made his excellent image *Dust* and talks us through how he used references to give his image an amazingly life-like appearance. Chase also discusses how he got the right feel for the image by using the characters’ facial expressions.

Dust

Software used: Photoshop

With this project, the thing I was most interested in was painting an image with a dark, moody atmosphere, much of it in shadow, and a bright spotlight to illuminate key elements. I was inspired by the work of the great Renaissance painter Caravaggio. I was intrigued by the idea of illustrating a very modern subject in a more classical style.

I used a few different brushes in this project, but most of the time I stuck to the good old Chalk brush, with pen pressure on and shape dynamics off (**Fig.01**).

I started off with a very rough black and white sketch (**Fig.02**). When drawing the first thumbnail of any image, I don't worry about accuracy, anatomy or even composition. In the beginning, what's most important is getting the gist of the image in my head down on paper; allowing myself the freedom that helps me to articulate my vision and develop new ideas. I decided I wanted the spotlight coming from the right in order to illuminate the foremost soldier's face as he looks around the corner, and also to create an air of mystery; just what exactly is he looking at? Initially, I wasn't sure how to pose the second soldier, but sometimes one element helps to define another. In this case, the lighting

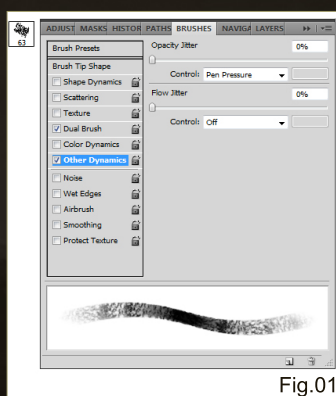


Fig.01



Fig.02



Fig.03

really determined his pose for me. I knew that I wanted him edge lit by the spotlight as well and for that to happen he had to be standing, peering over the side of the tank.

I started over and drew up a second, more refined sketch (**Fig.03**). I decided to adjust the angles of the rifles to make them suggest the

shape of an arrow pointing toward the foremost soldier's face, to better guide the eye towards him. I giddily realized that, in doing so, I could pick up some of the spotlight on the front guy's hand and rifle (an exciting discovery)! I also added a secondary light source from the left and mapped them both out (**Fig.04**).

As I continued working, I didn't deviate much from the color in my initial sketch. A monochromatic look, I decided, would best convey the gritty, war zone feel I was trying to get across, though in the end I wish I'd deviated just a bit more color-wise.

With the composition, lighting, and poses roughly mapped out, I began to finish the piece. For me, there are two ways to complete a project – keep things zoomed out and work on everything at once, or zoom in and finish it section by section. I jumped into the latter perhaps a bit too early. Normally, I try

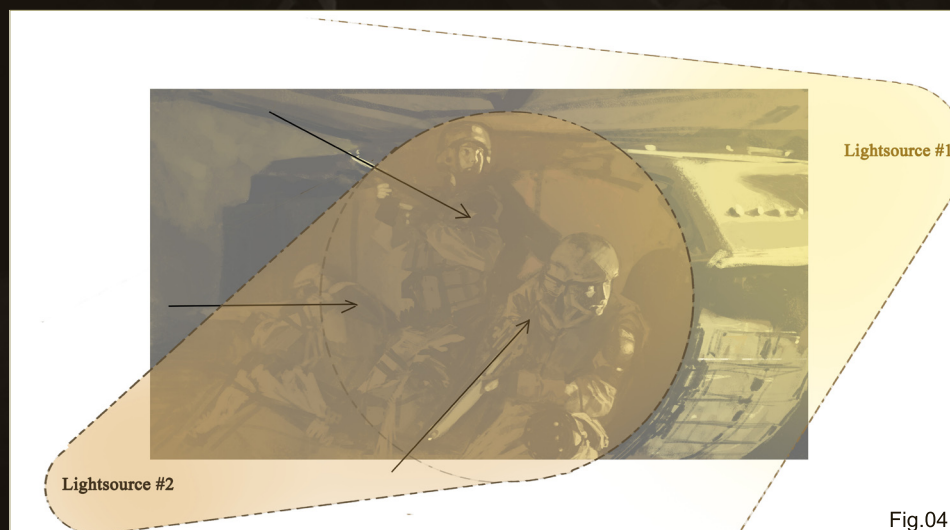


Fig.04

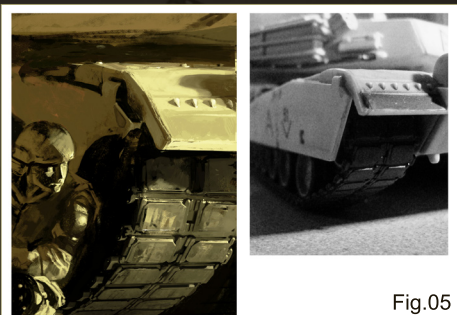


Fig.05

to start the final rendering only after nailing down the sketch. But I still wasn't 100% sure about what I had down, and as a result each figure underwent a few variations (not without frustration) before I was finally satisfied.

The first part I began working on was the front end of the tank. I've always felt that reference material is important, but with real-world mechanical objects, I find that references are particularly important. I happened to have a model of an Abrams on my desk, which I lit appropriately and directly referenced (**Fig.05**). With my model as a visual guide, this section was the most straightforward to complete.

As mentioned above, the soldiers went through a few variations during the painting process. Originally, the foremost soldier was going to bend forward a bit more, with his face uncovered (**Fig.06**). However, I wanted more emphasis on his eyes, so I scrapped this angle in favor of a pose that allowed for more light to



Fig.06

hit his face. Knowing the expression in his eyes was the single most important element – the key to the project's success – I got a friend to act it out and snapped a few reference photos (**Fig.07**). Using your photos as references is a simple way to ensure accuracy. You should strive to avoid copying photos pixel for pixel and definitely avoid tracing them. The reason behind this is that an image too dependent on a photo

reference can become stiff. I referenced his eyes pretty closely, but painted the helmet and goggles largely from my imagination.

The second figure was the most time consuming element in the piece, mostly because I just couldn't make up my mind. His head was especially problematic; first I wanted his face uncovered (**Fig.08a**), but I found that to be too

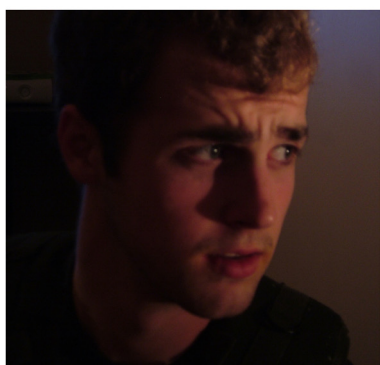


Fig.07

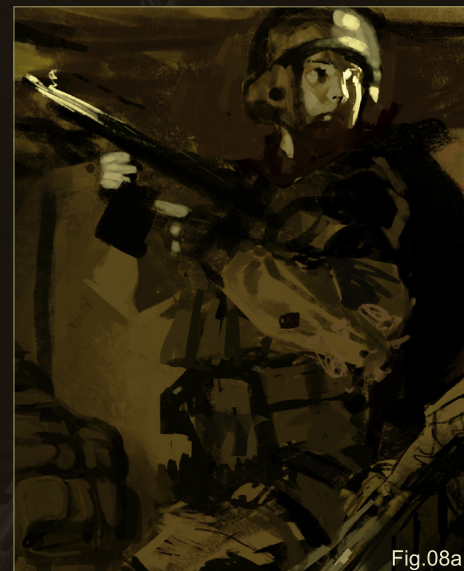


Fig.08a



Fig.08b



Fig.08c



Fig.08d

personal, so I went in the opposite direction and made him completely anonymous, covering him up with a balaclava and making his goggles opaque (Fig.08b – c). That made him feel too disconnected from the primary soldier, so I split the difference and made his goggles transparent and that brought things together for me (Fig.08d).

Soldier number three was, thankfully, fairly straightforward. He went through some variations as well, but nothing very drastic (Fig.09). With the three figures completed, the background fell into place rather quickly. What I wanted was simple – rubble fading away into a



Fig.09a



Fig.09b

dusty background. The best way to paint rubble is to lay down shapes without thinking about them too much. Real rubble falls randomly, so

I believe it should be painted kind of randomly too. After getting those basic shapes down a few minutes of quick noodling will wrap things up.



Fig.09c



Fig.09d

With everything painted I adjusted the overall brightness and contrast on adjustment layers and applied a very subtle noise grain to the whole thing just to give it a tiny bit of texture (Fig.10). And that's it! Hopefully this tutorial proves helpful and many thanks to *2DArtist* magazine!

Chase Stone

For more from this artist contact them at:
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Fig.10



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Making of

It's a new world

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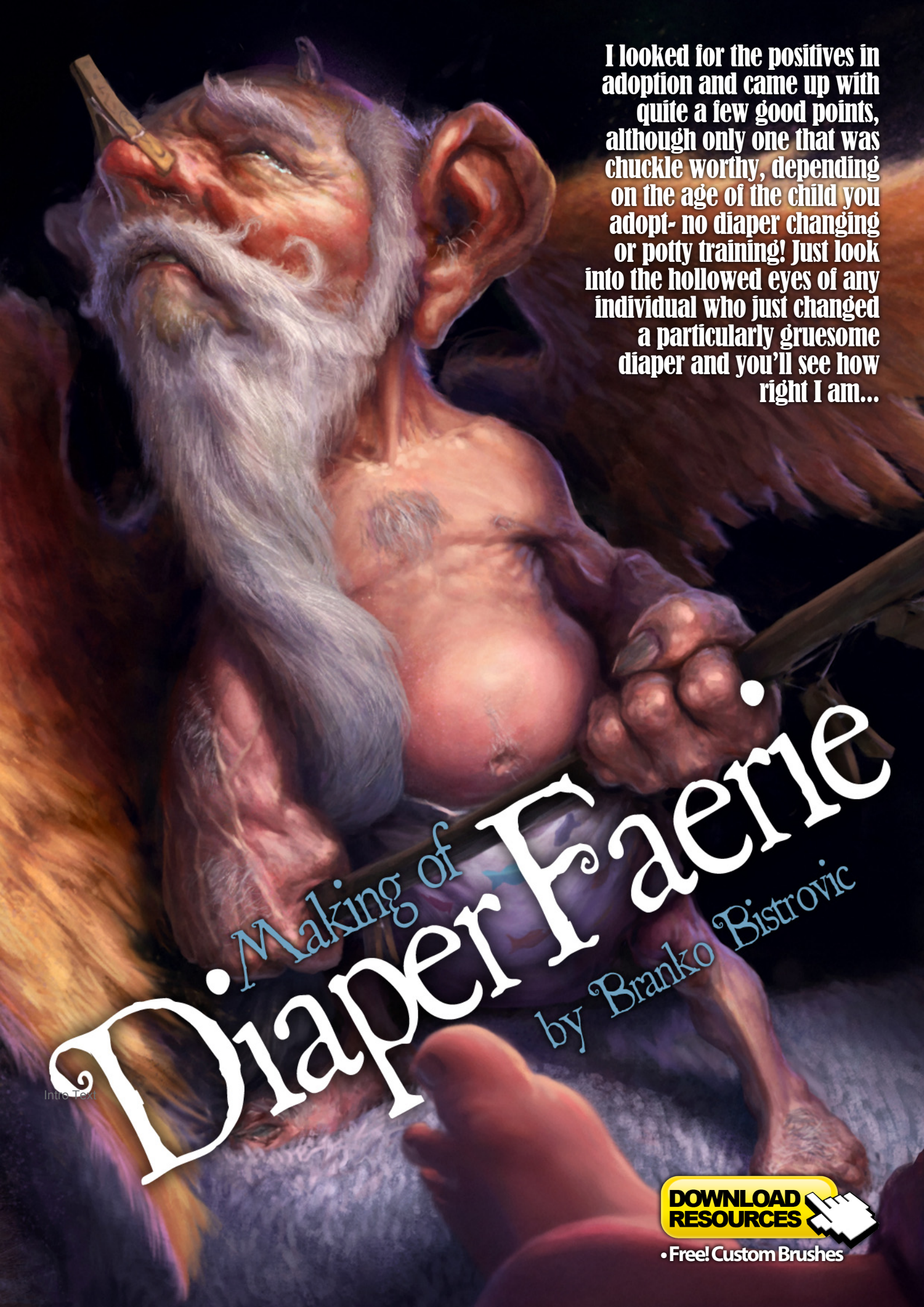
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I looked for the positives in adoption and came up with quite a few good points, although only one that was chuckle worthy, depending on the age of the child you adopt- no diaper changing or potty training! Just look into the hollowed eyes of any individual who just changed a particularly gruesome diaper and you'll see how right I am...

Making of
Diaper Faerie
by Branko Bistovic

Intro Text

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Software used: Photoshop CS4

I tend to paint a lot of gruesome and somber subject matter and it suffices to say that at times it all begins to sort of feel stale and repetitive.

So, there come days when I feel I need to bring a little more humor to my work, and this, fellow readers, is the result of one of those days.

The idea of a Diaper Fairy first started to take shape while both a friend and a colleague were expecting new additions to their family ranks. One was adopting, the other going about it the old fashioned root. Discussing their experiences with them, I found myself weighing in the pros and cons of the two options. Granted, many would immediately point out the obvious psychological predisposition to rearing your own flesh and blood, but playing devils advocate I looked for the positives in adoption and came up with quite a few good points, although only one that was chuckle worthy, depending on the age of the child you adopt- no diaper changing or potty training! Just look into the hollowed eyes of any individual who just changed a particularly gruesome diaper and you'll see how right I am... Now on with it!

Note: I'll be working in Adobe Photoshop CS4 throughout this painting.

I pretty much visualized in my head from the get go what I wanted in this piece and having the idea already established allowed me to work at a significantly quicker speed. I immediately

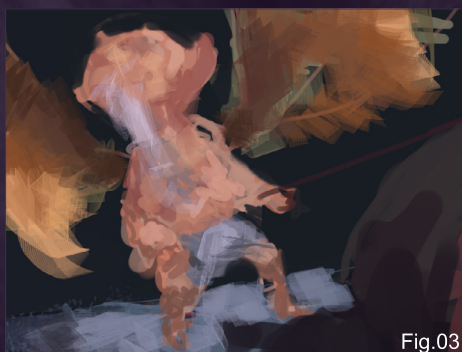


Fig.03



Fig.01

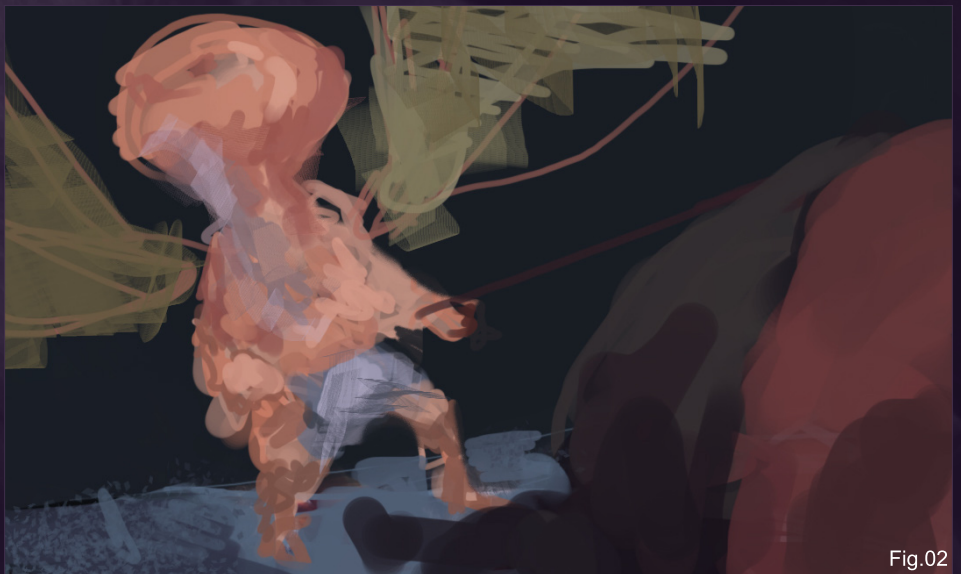


Fig.02

made the background dark, because I wanted to give the impression that the faerie was sort of doing this in the cover of night while no one was around to witness his humiliation. The dark also gave me a sense of claustrophobia, adding to the idea that the duty was unbearable. I then made some quick gestures deciding where I'd place the faerie, the baby and the perspective of the ground (**Fig.01**).

I continued the block in, keeping it very loose, giving the Faerie its wings and really only focusing on the silhouettes and placement of the subject matter. An accidental indication of a beard gives me the idea to make the Faerie a Dwarfish looking one. Weird and confusing I know, but it made me smile thinking of an old

mini grumpy dwarf in diapers with angelic wings, changing a kid's stinky diaper while holding back tears. On reflection maybe I should have called the piece Diaper Dwarf (**Fig.02**)

Okay, getting down to refining the shapes, deciding how big to make the head in proportion to the body, and also the baby in proportion to the whole faerie. I wanted to make it look ridiculous but still somehow feasible; it's a pretty difficult balance mostly because it's so subjective. While working on the piece I actually had someone suggest I make the head bigger, but before I got the chance to do so someone else chimed in that it should be smaller, I suppose in the end (if it's a personal piece) it's most important to go with what you feel works



Fig.04

best (unless of course the crit is valid in pointing something you missed.)

Here I'm also starting to establish the lighting at mid-ground, although I'm holding off on the foreground mass to the right (baby) for now, just until I know how bright I'm going to go with the mid (**Fig.03**).

At this point, the direction of the light is pretty much decided upon for the whole piece. So, it's been added to the foreground as well. Starting to clarify everything, wings, foreground baby clump, shape of Faerie head and body.

At the same time, I'm also focusing heavily on the gesture of the Faerie. I want him cringing and repulsed, as if this is as low as low can get.



Fig.05

I know that the gesture will sell the piece, if it isn't right then there will really be no impact to the viewer, unless of course someone likes to look at pretty wings and nothing else matters, in which case I can just paint the wings pretty and that would be it. Although, as we all know, "Wing Lovers" are the shallowest of individuals (**Fig.04**).

Well, as you can see I'm starting to near the detailing stage. At this point, I've been primarily

using the hard round brush that comes as stock with Photoshop, varying its hardness between 30-100% depending on the edges I want to put down. Generally speaking, harder edges demand our focus while softer edges allow for our eyes to take a glance. Although, it's all about contrast of course, if you have a panting with just hard edges and then you introduce a prominent line with a soft edge, that line will jump out at the viewer. Try it yourself. The mind is a funny monkey. It's probably just a painterly



Fig.06

Diaper Faerie Making Of



convention of mirroring how we actually see, sharp edges represent things we have in focus and therefore worthy of our attention, while soft edges either represent things too far off, too close, or on the edge of our periphery, to really be discernable and therefore not in our immediate attention. That's just a hypothesis, if you know the answer feel free to drop me a line! (Fig.05)

Now I'm going in and adding the hopefully adorable detail (Fig.06). I'm looking to make the Faerie cute, yet hairy and sort of grimy. Hey, he's got a tough job to do, the kind that puts hair on your chest! (Not literally of course... otherwise we'd have many scruffy ladies walking around).

Next I try to focus on anatomy, and the facial expression, along with the flow of the hair, wings and the strands of the towel that covers most of the ground. I made a new brush to use for the hair on the beard and also the wings. It has some texture applied to it, but just lightly so that it breaks up the digital feel.



Fig.07

As always, this final stage, the refining of everything, is by far the most time consuming step and it can be quite demoralizing when things seem done but somehow not quite where you want them to be (Fig.07). At such moments of frustration, my best remedy is to take a step back, get some fresh air (maybe cry a little in some alley) then return to the painting and hopefully discover what is missing.

And here you have it, the finished piece (Fig.08)! I zeroed in on the wings and face primarily, tried to give the piece some motion, even though looking at it now some parts of it feel over rendered. I decided in the end to have him look heavenward with a teary glisten in his eye and multicolored fishes on his diapers.

Looking back on this piece I can see some serious issues with the anatomy, the pectorals



Fig.08





are way off and don't insert properly. The veins are not great, I really have to practice my veins, but I do like the final expression and the way the ear/beard came out. The wings are okay as well, but they don't seem quite as fluffy as I had intended.

This was pretty much a piece which I whimsically began but then decided to see all the way through. Now that it's done I'm happy to have at least put a foot past the comfort zone of gruesome and somber. I think at times it's important to vary your subject matter; even if it isn't something entirely different it'll still challenge you in new and unexpected ways. If anything, it at least refreshed me a little for whatever piece I was going to tackle next!

Branko Bistrovic

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